

DOROTHY & HER FRIENDS

BY ELLEN OLNEY KIRK



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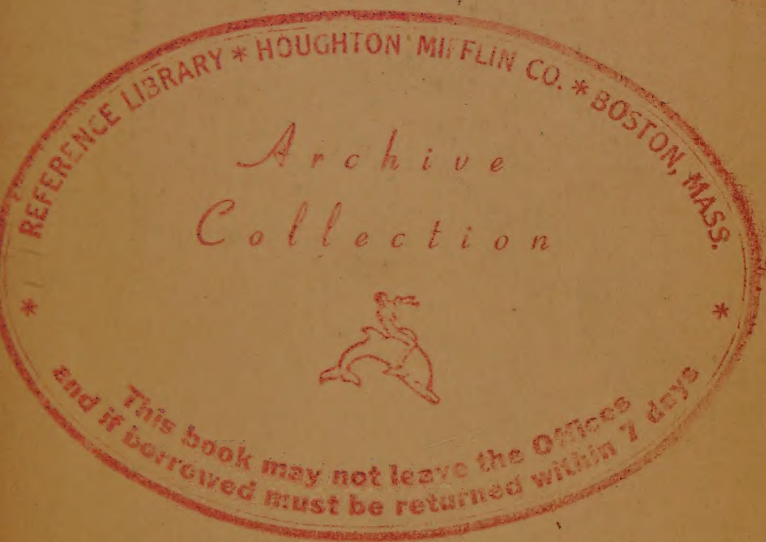
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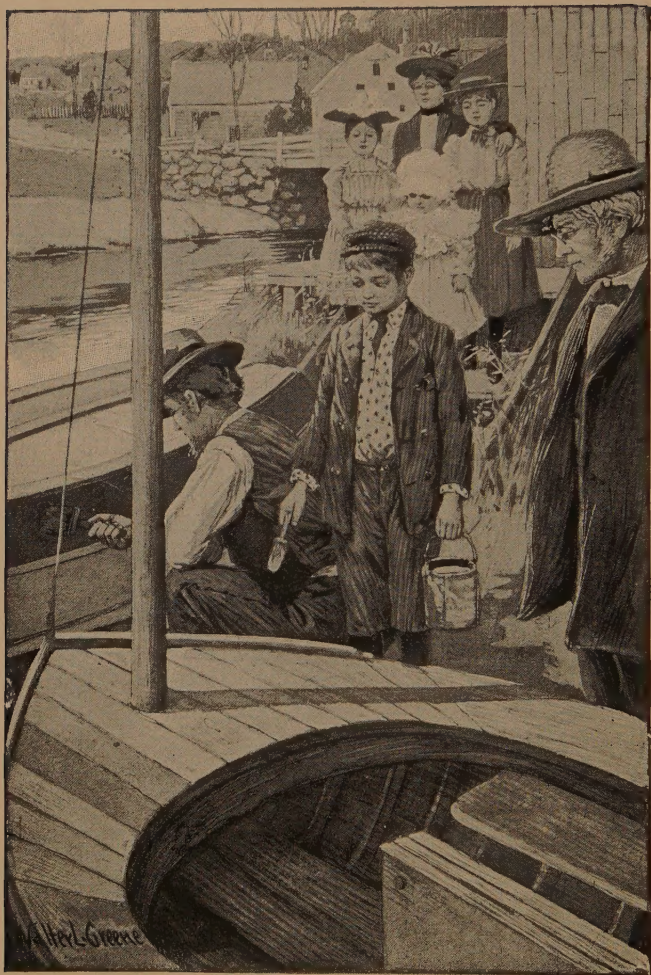
THE STORY OF LAWRENCE GARTHE.

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DOROTHY DEANE. A Story for Children.

DOROTHY AND HER FRIENDS. Illustrated.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK



CAPTAIN NARRAWAY AND JEM FINISHED THE ROW-BOAT
(page 63)

DOROTHY AND HER FRIENDS

BY

ELLEN OLNEY KIRK



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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ONCE MORE
TO JULIA, MARION, AND HERBERT



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DOROTHY AND HER FRIENDS

CHAPTER I

JINNY

ONE pleasant morning just at the end of March, a little girl, dressed as if for a journey, was standing on the steps of a large pleasant house which faced a wide village street, looking much excited. Just behind her a small Skye terrier, in an attitude of extreme dejection, was watching her through the tangles of his hair. He knew that his mistress was going away. In front of the Rectory opposite a boy had climbed the gatepost in order to command the widest possible view, and a slim, straight girl, with spectacles and two little wisps of smoothly braided hair on her shoulders, was bending over the top of the gate, straining her powers of vision to see what was not to be seen. Nothing moved along the wide tranquil main street of High Elms except the butcher, serving his customers with chops and joints.

A lady had come to the door of the large house.

"Oh, mamma!" the little girl in the serge frock and sailor hat cried, "I begin to be so afraid cousin Bevis has forgotten!"

"It is ten minutes to nine," said the lady, "and the train is due at 8.53."

"I see a white horse!" shouted the girl with the spectacles.

"Yes, it's Truett!" shrieked the boy on the post.

For one of the many excellent things about living in a village is that one knows not only one's neighbors, with their ins and outs, their ways and doings, their every-day clothes, their Sunday clothes, but also their cats, dogs, horses, and men servants. And this was surely the Bevises' white horse, driven by the Bevises' man, Truett. The prospect of a journey to town and a wonderful day there seeing the sights, which had for some moments been obscured by doubts, cleared up on the instant. The little girl gave one more last embrace to her mother, kissed Toby the terrier on the top of his head, ran down the steps, and was caught up in a twinkling by Truett, and with a wave of the hand to the rectory children was borne triumphantly on

In the direction of the station, towards which the train was also sweeping round the curve. For one minute it did seem as if all the haste they could make was of no use, for the locomotive, with its long pennant of steam, went so much faster. Here again came in the advantage of living in a village where everybody knows you and your white horse.

“Hold on!” cried Dr. Goodlove to the conductor. “There’s Mr. Bevis.”

And the engine, puffing and snorting in its eagerness to be on its way, waited for a fraction of a moment. Somebody caught up the little girl and put her on board the train; somebody else helped the gentleman up; the inside people changed seats in order to give the two a chance to sit together, and there at last they actually were. Oh, really, it had been so exciting! for to have the train wait for one, then start off the moment one had boarded it, made one feel so very important.

“Here we are,” said Mr. Bevis, who was a man of fifty or more, with a very high forehead with a few wisps of very fine hair coming down in the middle; very large and very blue eyes, which could be seen at this moment, for he had taken off his glasses and was polishing them;

and a largish mouth, with very thin lips, which had a good deal of expression in them. "Here we are, Dorothea," he said again, smiling down at his little companion. "They say a miss is as good as a mile. Why could n't we say a mile is as good as a miss?"

"I don't see that it would mean anything," replied the little girl.

"Perhaps it would n't," said Mr. Bevis. "I have heard that a proverb is the wisdom of many and the wit of one. You evidently think I have n't the necessary wit."

"Oh no, I did n't mean that," cried the little girl, quite distressed.

"Well, what I meant was," Mr. Bevis proceeded, putting on his glasses, "that so long as we did n't get left it's no matter."

"Yes, all is well that ends well," said the little girl. "That is what you mean."

"Ah, it's you who have the wit," said Mr. Bevis. Off came his glasses again, and had to be polished and repolished. His eyes were so bright it seemed really a pity to cover them up. His whole face was very bright, yet at the same time it had a dreamy sort of look. He had a way of putting his head a little on one side and thinking; at such times even his nose seemed to

be thinking. But at the same time his eyes and nose and mouth had an air of his thinking so much about one thing he couldn't take time to think about other things.

"You see, Dorothea," he now began to explain, "I got belated. Dressing one's self is so extremely difficult. Don't you think so, Dorothea?"

"I generally have some one to help me," said the little girl.

"Of course you have," said Mr. Bevis, with an air of indignation. "Thus you can be always ready, always well dressed. And I have to do it all by myself. There are so many different things, how is one to tell which comes first and which last? Things ought to be numbered. Then when one has decided how they go on, one suddenly thinks to one's self, 'There, I haven't got a clean collar.' So one rushes to the drawer, and the drawer sticks, — actually refuses to open; then when one braces one's self and tugs hard, out it comes with a bang and almost knocks one over and upsets all the ornaments and smashes things generally. Then when one tries to put on the thing, what does one do but drop one's stud? It's no use looking for it: every stud becomes invisible the moment it

drops, so one hunts up another, and that's too big. The collar buttonhole won't go on to it. One has to find another stud, or hunt up a pair of scissors and cut a slit. Oh, it's so very hard to dress one's self!"

"Yes, indeed, cousin Bevis," said the little girl, with commiseration.

"And, after all, that's only the beginning," pursued cousin Bevis. "For the important question is whether to put on a thick coat and waistcoat and dispense with an overcoat, or put on a thinner suit and take your overcoat. You can't get at the newspaper to find out about the weather probabilities without ringing all the bells in the house or calling till you are hoarse. So how is one to know?"

"It is dreadful," said the little girl.

"Then when one finally does manage to make up one's mind, — wrong, of course, — and is dressed and goes down to breakfast, of course it's late, and there is only time to eat some simple little thing. Then comes the question, is it to be porridge, a bit of toast, an egg, or a chop? Which is best to travel on? Which is most nourishing? How, I beg to know, Dorothea, am I to be able to choose the right thing all in a moment?"

“Which did you choose, cousin Bevis?” inquired the little girl, with much interest.

“I had no time to choose,” replied Mr. Bevis mournfully. “How could I tell without going into the library and reading up a book on dietetics? So I ate them all, — bolted them right down and two cups of strong coffee besides.”

“Well, I’m so glad,” said the little girl cheerfully, “that you did have time to eat a good breakfast.”

“I didn’t really have time,” insisted Mr. Bevis, “for just as I had got into the carriage it occurred to me that I had on my reading glasses. Now reading glasses are all very well if you can afford to hold everything up to the tip of your nose, but if you wish to make out an acquaintance across the street they’re useless. So I had to stop and shout at the top of my lungs to somebody to bring my other glasses. I thought shouting would gain time. The cook heard me and dropped the bread pan and spoiled her dough; the maid in the dining room dropped the tray full of glass and china; sister Rachel knocked down the flower stand where she was watering her plants. I finally got my glasses, but I can assure you, Dorothea, that going on a journey is a very serious and costly matter.

Nevertheless, here we are, and, as you say, 'all is well that ends well.' "

Strange to relate, however, the troubles of that day had only begun. At this moment in came the conductor, saying, "Tickets, please." Mr. Bevis began to fumble in his pockets, — not for his tickets, because, as we have seen, he had had no time to buy any ; but for his pocket-book. First he felt in the right-hand breast pocket of his waistcoat, then in the left. Next he searched all through the inside pockets of his coat, and finally all through the outside pockets, his little companion watching his motions with intense interest, as one expression after another chased itself across his face. At first he was patient, then impatient ; presently a curious feeling of surprise asserted itself ; lastly, he was incredulous. " Bless my soul ! " he said, at first thoughtfully, then more energetically, " Bless my soul ! " Could it be that he had no money in any of his pockets ? He dived into his trousers pockets and brought out a knife, a key, and a small snap purse, the latter of which he opened and looked into it ruefully.

" Dorothea," he now remarked, " I must have left my wallet in the waistcoat pocket of my thin clothes. I have just forty-five cents."

The little girl had already made a movement to open the little bag buckled at her waist. She was about to tell Mr. Bevis that she had twenty-five cents, when he turned round to Dr. Goodlove, who was sitting behind him reading the newspaper.

"Doctor," he said, "I could n't quite make up my mind what it was best to wear, and I must have left my money in the pocket of my other suit."

Now Dr. Goodlove, a big strong-looking man with a twinkle in his eye, being everybody's doctor at High Elms, and knowing everybody's constitutions and ailments and idiosyncrasies, could n't easily be surprised at Mr. Bevis's forgetting anything. So he handed out a five-dollar bill to the conductor to pay the fares, and then said to Mr. Bevis:—

"I suppose you may want a few pennies to spend besides?"

"I really am in a very delicate position," said Mr. Bevis; "I asked this young lady to go to town with me; I was going to give her all sorts of treats, and now"—

"I should think so," said the doctor; "a very delicate position indeed."

"I never was in such a position in my life

before," Mr. Bevis went on. "Generally I have little or nothing to do with young ladies. I fancy they're expensive."

"Young ladies are frightfully expensive," said Dr. Goodlove. "I ought to know, for I have four of them. And then, besides, there is Mrs. Goodlove; she was once a young lady, and she has always been the most expensive of them all."

Mr. Bevis made a gesture of despair.

The little girl felt quite uncomfortable.

"Oh, cousin Bevis," she now ventured to say with much earnestness, putting her hand on Mr. Bevis' arm. "I'm not a bit of a young lady. Mamma always says she does n't want me to be a young lady for years and years to come, — indeed, never."

"Now don't be letting him off in that easy way, Dorothea," said the doctor. "He promised you a treat, and he must treat you well. What are you intending to do, Bevis?"

"We did talk about a ride in a hansom cab," said Mr. Bevis confidentially. "Dorothea has never been in a hansom cab."

"Hansom cabs cost a great deal of money," said Dr. Goodlove severely.

"Of course I must give her a good luncheon," proceeded Mr. Bevis.

“Luncheon!” exclaimed Dr. Goodlove, with an air of luncheon’s being distinctly too much. “If it’s a question of luncheon, — why not a frugal bun?”

“But, doctor,” pleaded Mr. Bevis, “taking a young lady out, and for the first time! Then, too, not a dreary old father of a family like you, but a handsome, rollicking, and well-to-do young bachelor like me; of course, I wish to offer her something delicious, comforting, nourishing.”

“That sounds very expensive.”

“Just a bit of shad, Bermuda potatoes, and early peas, a few croquettes, a nice little patty, and salad.”

Dr. Goodlove took out a roll of bills and thrust it upon Mr. Bevis.

“Take all I’ve got,” he said. “You are in for it.”

Mr. Bevis chose two of the bank notes and gave the rest back.

“We’ll try to scramble along on this, won’t we, Dorothea?” he said. “Of course we shall like some sweets, some ice cream, and strawberries.”

“Oh, cousin Bevis!” murmured the little girl, who really had not known which way to look

while this conversation was going on. It was so very embarrassing. She felt all the time that she ought to say that it was no matter about shad and peas. Shad and peas in March were too expensive, as the doctor said. She could easily have gone without Bermuda potatoes; for potatoes have an every-day, homely look whether they come across seas or are raised in one's own garden. It might have given her a pang to forego the croquettes! Still, under the circumstances perhaps a bun would be nearer the mark, although buns are a trifle choky. However, it was not for her to interrupt her betters; and when it came to the mention of ice cream and strawberries, nobody could expect such heroism as that she should refuse ice cream and early strawberries, so she simply faltered:—

“Oh, cousin Bevis!” and let her eyes and cheeks and lips do the rest.

“Why, Dorothea,” said Mr. Bevis, “it seems as if you like ice cream and strawberries.”

“*Like* them!” the little girl repeated. “I just simply *adore* them.”

“Do you, indeed?” said Mr. Bevis. “Now that is singular. You know, I presume, that they are absolutely unwholesome? I invariably say to myself before I take the first spoonful,

‘This will probably be the death of me.’ Then it’s so nice when I take the second I don’t care. A man was born to die.”

“But you don’t really die after eating ice cream and strawberries?” the little girl inquired anxiously.

“Not yet,” said Mr. Bevis. “However, the time will come.”

At this point some acquaintance on the train asked Mr. Bevis whether he had got any seed into the ground yet. Mr. Bevis replied that he had planted potatoes, sweet peas, and garden peas the day before. Then they went on talking about gardens and keeping bees, and for the remainder of the journey the little girl amused herself by looking out of the window, getting glimpses of the wide sound, of creeks and bays, of woods where the snow still lay in patches. Then came the city suburb, and finally the tunnel, and presently as they neared the Grand Central station all the men began to double up their newspapers, put on their overcoats, and assume quite a different look, as if now they had something serious to do.

“Well, Dorothea,” said Mr. Bevis, turning back to his companion, “how have you liked it so far?”

"Oh, it's beautiful," replied the little girl.

"Let me see," said Mr. Bevis; "what was it we were going to do first?"

"You said it would be best to go straight down to the aquarium," the little girl answered modestly.

"And then what next?"

"Up to the park to the museum, and to see the animals," she said, with sparkling eyes.

"Now, Dorothea," struck in Dr. Goodlove, leaning down for a moment as he passed along the aisle, "mind that you make your cousin Bevis give you spring shad and peas and croquettes and all the luxuries. Don't let him defraud you."

"Oh, I'll trust cousin Bevis," cried the little girl.

"Then after that luncheon," said Mr. Bevis, who enjoyed the doctor's jokes, "we will have the ride in the hansom, and then take the 4.04 train home."

This was very pleasant. These two did not hurry. Even when the cars really stopped they waited until the rush was over, then hand in hand made their way along the platform to the street, where the little girl was startled by having men and boys rush at her with the most terrific looks, shouting at the top of their voices, "Car-

riage, carriage!" "Cab, cab!" "Baggage express, baggage express!" "Hansom, hansom, hansom!"

She wondered how anybody knew that she and Mr. Bevis wanted a hansom. She tried to say "Not until afternoon, please," but nobody paid the least attention but went on yelling louder than ever. It was a relief to enter the waiting room.

"Now, my dear little Dorothea," said Mr. Bevis, "if you will sit down in that quiet corner and promise not to stir hand or foot until you see me again, I'll just run over to my bookseller and leave him an order for a book on bees that Davis was telling me I ought to have. I would take you with me, but it will save time if I run over by myself. I'll be back in a jiffy. You promise me not to stir?"

The little girl promised. She had no wish to move hand or foot. So many people were hurrying past her to take the trains at the open gates, it was very amusing to sit there and use her eyes. Such different kinds of people: some perfectly equipped with bags, umbrellas, tickets in hand, at the right gate for their particular train; others without tickets and wrong altogether; some easy, jaunty; others overbur-

dened with parcels, anxious, ill at ease ; some of the women twisting themselves around tugging at their pockets to find their tickets, but getting lost in the folds of their dresses. One of these came up to our little girl and asked her help, whereupon our little girl herself became quite excited in hunting up the lost pocket, then felt very triumphant when she stumbled upon it, and fishing down to the very depths of it brought up the ticket. Then bells began to sound, and everybody was all at once in the most desperate hurry, — people who had stopped to send telegrams, to buy papers and magazines, to get their parcels from the package room ; all were hurrying and scurrying and tumbling over each other, all looking so red and anxious and cross one would not have got in their way if one could have helped it.

“Cousin Bevis and I are not the only ones who are late,” the little girl said to herself with glee. Then just as the last gate was closing it opened, and a man, frantically gesturing, was seen dashing through and making his way to the train, which was on the point of starting.

Then for a little the place was quiet, only to be invaded by a crowd of people from the incoming trains. In fact, there was so much to

look at, to listen to, to be amused by, the little girl had quite forgotten who she was and where she was and why she was there, until suddenly a bell sounded again, and looking up she saw that it was almost eleven o'clock. Mr. Bevis had been gone a whole hour. When he had said a "jiffy," not knowing what a jiffy was, she had supposed it was something that went so fast you hardly noticed it. Evidently a jiffy lasted at least sixty minutes. However, it was so interesting to look at the new set of people now arriving for the eleven o'clock train, she soon forgot about Mr. Bevis and everybody else. There were grand people arriving in carriages, with servants in livery; there were little girls like herself, with nurses and governesses; people came in cabs, with trunks and bags; people emerged from street cars. From all directions they swarmed in, bought tickets, made inquiries, looked up trains on time tables, sent telegrams, bought newspapers, magazines, and books, rushed around looking for people whom they expected to meet and generally didn't find; fumbled in bags and pockets for tickets, and applied for admission at the wrong gate. It really might have seemed as if the crowd that had set off by the ten o'clock expresses and locals had simply

turned back in order to start by the eleven o'clock. Just so many people were late again; just so many overladen men and women, with furious red faces, arrived just as the gates were about to be closed. Then once more all was quiet for a moment, and the little girl, drawing a breath of relief, had time to think who she was, where she was, and why she was there. Where was cousin Bevis? It was now quarter past eleven.

She sat up straighter, and her eyes traveled all over the place. As she looked in vain for her cousin Bevis, she was conscious of a pair of eyes watching her. They belonged to a little girl not far from her own size, who was wedged in between a door and the end of a row of seats. No sooner had their glances fairly met than this watcher seemed to vanish. The next three quarters of an hour halted and crept along. Time no longer flew. There was getting to be a sort of monotony about the ebb and flow of the tide of people. Not one of them seemed to be conscious that he or she was doing exactly what others had been doing all the morning. Still, although the incomers and outgoers were all so much alike, they did help to pass the time; and again when she looked at the clock it was a

quarter past the hour, — now a quarter past noon. *Where was cousin Bevis?* She looked around again for him, and as before did not see cousin Bevis, but did see that droll little girl watching her as a cat watches a mouse.

Other people had looked at her, but these eyes were fixed upon her in a different way; the gaze seemed to burn. Our little girl was conscious, too, that the owner of the eyes was edging nearer to her, — not openly, but in a way as if it were desirable not to attract attention. Once the eyes vanished behind a door, then they reappeared at a different angle, and it could be seen that they belonged to a keen little face no bigger than a teacup, which was lighted up, not only by these big eyes, which seemed to blaze, but by a wide mouth, with thin scarlet lips, which, parting, showed small, white, even teeth, that seemed to laugh of themselves. Until now our little traveler had seen nothing but the eyes and mouth, but now seizing a favorable moment the figure belonging to them skipped nimbly across the intervening space and seated herself next to our little heroine. Then they looked at each other for a long moment in silence, our little girl thinking that the other was the very oddest she had ever come across.

The newcomer had not only those bright eyes and lips, but an inquisitive nose, which helped to give her an air of acute, ready intelligence. Her dress was really surprising. From the hat on her head to the shoes on her feet not one article of her attire seemed to suggest that it had been intended to fit the wearer. The hat had, in its day, been very fine, but its day had passed, and there was something in the color of the crimson velvet and in the droop of the two ostrich feathers which composed the trimming fearful to behold. It needed all the pertness of the little face beneath to redeem it from being woeful in its bedraggled state. For a frock she wore something that suggested a riding habit, of velveteen of no particular color, although slits in it opened here and there to show something red underneath. Then the shoes! the shoes were unspeakable!

After they had looked at each other for a long minute, the stranger volunteered:—

“My name is Jinny. What’s your’n?”

“I am Dorothy Deane,” replied our little girl.

“What’s you a-settin’ here all alone for?”

“I am waiting for a gentleman.”

“Yer’ve ben waitin’ here ever sence ten

o'clock," said Jinny. "I seen yer. Yer was here when I fust looked."

"The gentleman went to buy a book," said Dorothy, with a little quaver in her voice.

"Dressed up to kill, ain't yer! Gloves on yer hands, all so fine!" remarked Jinny, looking at the gloves with such an indescribable glance that they seemed to burn. Dorothy took them off and put them in her bag. She herself was not fond of wearing gloves.

"P'r'aps he's dropped yer," Jinny now suggested briskly.

"Oh no!" cried Dorothy.

"People does, yer know, when they wants ter git rid of children," explained Jinny, out of her large experience. "They puts 'em in bundles and drops 'em down airies; they leaves 'em on doorsteps. Many a one has been found in an ash heap."

Dorothy, however, showed no alarm.

"He will be back soon," she observed placidly.

"I'll bet 'most anything," said Jinny with spirit, "that he don't never mean to come back."

"He forgets sometimes," said Dorothy. "Perhaps he has forgotten."

"Is he yer father?"

"No, not my father; he's my father's cousin."

"Lots o' folks, hain't yer? Mother, too?"

"Oh yes."

"Live high, I suppose?"

"Live high!" Dorothy repeated, a little bewildered by the phrase.

"Like fightin' cocks," explained Jinny.
"Plenty to eat an' drink."

"Oh yes," said Dorothy, "that is, I generally have enough to eat and drink."

"I allus thought," said Jinny, with an air of intense amusement, "I allus thought I'd be in high company yit."

Dorothy, not feeling quite sure what to say, made no answer to this remark.

"I say," whispered Jinny, plucking at Dorothy's frock, "come out an' let's have some fun."

"No, I thank you," said Dorothy. "I must wait here."

"I'll show yer things. Ever ben to the park to see the wild beasts?" Jinny inquired, still plucking at the frock.

"Not yet," said Dorothy, that little break coming into her voice again. "Cousin Bevis told me to stay just here."

"Do yer allus do as yer bid?"

"Why, of course."

Jinny fairly rocked herself in her enjoyment of this confession.

“Oh, my! she allus does just what she’s bid. Ain’t she a good one?”

The tears came to Dorothy’s eyes, but she contrived not to let them overflow.

“Yer don’t know what good times is,” said Jinny.

“Oh yes, I do. I have real good times,” insisted Dorothy.

Jinny looked at her from head to foot, with that keen, inquisitive smile.

“I seen ’em before with their nusses in the parks,” she now soliloquized. “I seen ’em in kerridges and a-goin’ to church an’ Sunday-school; I seen ’em at the settlemint where they shows us picturs, an’ I says to myself, allus says to myself, ‘Pore things, you don’t have no fun.’”

“Do you have fun?” Dorothy now asked.

“Fun? I don’t never hev anything else.”

“I’m glad,” said Dorothy. She did not wish to say that she feared Jinny had known bad times, but she had been a little afraid that was the case. “What do you do when you have fun?” she now questioned timidly.

“All sorts of things,” replied Jinny compre-

hensively. Then as if feeling it necessary to prove her case she went on : —

“Did *yer* ever sell papers? Did *yer* ever go screaming ’long the streets calling, ‘Extry! Great murder over at Hoboken!’ or somewhere?”

Dorothy shuddered and shrank back.

“Did *yer* ever dance an’ sing an’ hev lots o’ coppers flung at *yer*?”

Dorothy shook her head.

“Come ’long with me an’ I ’ll show *yer* things,” Jinny now said, with a fine air of patronage.

“No, thank you,” Dorothy replied with decision. “I shall stay right here till cousin Bevis comes.”

“An’ when he told *yer* he was comin’ back straight off! He don’t do what he said he would! Come out, I say. It’s so awful dull a-sittin’ cooped up here.”

“I promised cousin Bevis. Besides, mamma would not like it,” said Dorothy, firm as a rock.

“‘Mamma’—all so fine,” said Jinny, raising her eyes to the ceiling. “Oh, lor’! I am in high company.” Then looking back at Dorothy, “Got anything to eat in that there bag o’ *your’n*?”

“No,” murmured Dorothy regretfully.

"Have n't yer hed nothin' to eat?"

"No."

"Oh, lor'! Don't you feel hungry?"

"Well, — just a little," Dorothy faltered, thinking of that luncheon cousin Bevis had promised.

"How 're yer goin' to get anything to eat?" demanded Jinny.

"I don't know."

"Got any money to buy things?"

"I have got a little money," said Dorothy, with some natural pride.

Jinny's whole face took on a look of the keenest interest.

"Got money!" she exclaimed. "Yer got money! An' yer a-settin' starvin' here?"

"I hain't got a very great deal," said Dorothy.

"An' yer afraid to spend it, I s'pose, pore thing. She thinks her mamma and her papa an' all the grand relations would n't like it."

To this taunt Dorothy made no reply.

"A-settin' here starvin'," cried Jinny, "when there's bananas, when there's ollanges an' apples in sight!"

It did sound very tempting, but Dorothy shook her head.

"I don't believe I have got enough to buy those things," she said rather drearily.

"Ef I hed jest ten cents in my pocket," Jinny began, when Dorothy interrupted her, saying:—

"Oh! I've got more than that,—I have got twenty-five. But if cousin Bevis should happen to come"—

"Oh, he won't come! He knows he's a-leavin' you here famishin'."

"He did n't mean to," Dorothy insisted.

"The illigance o' thim bananas!" said Jinny, closing her eyes the better to behold the ecstatic vision of the fruit stall. "An' thin the ollanges. An' jest half a block off is a place where you buy cakes with cocoanut inside and frosting out. Oh, they 'ud jest melt in yer mouth."

It did sound very delicious. Dorothy was beginning to be so hungry.

"For twenty-five cents I could buy yer what the queen herself 'ud be proud to eat," said Jinny, her whole face lighted up with a honeyed smile of persuasion, her glittering black eyes holding Dorothy under their spell; her whole look, her attitude, the gesture of the little dirty, clawlike hands showing a passionate

eagerness, — “an’ with ice cream to top it off with.”

“Do you mean,” inquired Dorothy, “that if I gave you the money to spend for me, you could get the things and bring them here?”

“As aisy as anything,” said Jinny, her whole face flooded with rapture at the idea.

“Of course,” Dorothy explained, as she put her hand on the clasp of her bag, “I should want you to have half of everything.”

Odd to relate, at this generous proposal Jinny’s face fell. It was as if something disturbed her conscience. However, as Dorothy took out a little chamois-skin purse and extracted from it the brand-new quarter of a dollar which was her week’s allowance, Jinny’s features lighted up again. Her eyes seemed to give out a flash at the sight of the money. She turned, gave a furtive glance round to see if they were observed, then uttering in a husky voice the words: —

“Oh, the meal I’ll be bringin’ yer in five minutes,” — she clutched at the piece of silver, made a dart at the door, and Dorothy caught a glimpse of her running past the window at the top of her speed.

“She does n’t mean to keep me waiting

long," Dorothy said to herself, with a little smile, thinking of the bananas, the oranges, the cakes, and the package of ice cream which was to top off the luncheon.

CHAPTER II

OVER AT THE RECTORY

“And she — never — came — back?” gasped Jem.

“I should n’t have expected it,” said Tish. “Of course she was after your money all the time.”

It was the day following Dorothy’s trip to New York, and she was over at the rectory with Tish, Jem, Peggy, and little Emily. That yesterday in New York, with its hopes, its fears, its strange climaxes, was now seen as a whole, and the story could be told from beginning to end. The painful waiting moments no longer ticked themselves away one by one. She was no longer studying the page of cruel disappointment and experience, but had learned it by heart. She had told the wondering children about being deposited on the bench by cousin Bevis; about Jinny’s appearing and disappearing with the quarter of a dollar. She did not find it necessary to describe her sensations while

waiting for Jinny to *reappear*. Along with their pain was surprise and not a little wrath. About three o'clock Dorothy had begun to feel as if all hope was over. Evidently she was lost. "I do wonder," the little girl was just saying to herself, "who is going to save me?" Then whom should she see but Mr. Bevis coming in, with his arms full of parcels, rushing towards the gate to take the 3.04 local express. If we should try to describe just how Dorothy had jumped up, run after him, and put her hand on his arm, saying, "Here I am, please, cousin Bevis," and what cousin Bevis had said in return, — his ejaculations of consternation, of anxiety, of pity, his self-upbraidings, his self-condemnation, his apologies, his beating his head, his tearing his hair over his absent-mindedness, there would be no room in this book for anything else. He implored Dorothy never to breathe a word to any one alive on the subject; he said he could n't possibly have any human being know how he had treated her and then go on living afterwards; it was all to be a close secret between himself and herself all their days, and he was to devote the entire remainder of his life to trying to make up to her for his incredible, his impossible, his atrocious behavior.

Then when they took the train, finding a dozen of his High Elms friends and neighbors in the car, Mr. Bevis instantly poured out the story to each and every one of them in turn. He described how he had left Dorothy for a minute, just for one minute, to order a book from his bookseller on bee culture ; then finding that the man had it he just looked inside, and became so interested in the subject of beehives everything else went out of his head. He had ordered the wrong sort ; it was necessary to see the people to whom he had given his order and change it before it was too late. He had accordingly, in a sort of delirium, rushed to Sixth Avenue, and had taken the elevated down to Cortlandt Street. Then at his seedsman's, his imagination becoming inflamed by the pictures of sweet peas, mammoth tomatoes, lettuces, and the like, he had bought more flower seeds, vegetable seeds, potatoes, and the like ; he had talked about cucumber frames ; he had discussed roses, carnations, — and all that time, like Casabianca on the burning deck, Dorothea had been sitting in the waiting room at the station. It was well called a *waiting* room !

Everybody knowing Mr. Bevis had laughed, for everybody knowing him knew that he was

absent-minded, and it seemed the best joke in the world. At the same time it had been very hard on Dorothy, and everybody made a little heroine of her. One lady gave her cream peppermints, another chocolates, a third some salted almonds, a fourth a big bunch of the sweetest violets, a fifth a pot of daffodils just ready to open, and a sixth a basket of fruit. But before she had time to do more than taste one of the chocolate creams they were at High Elms, and the story had to be told over again, this time to Mrs. Clare, that is, Dorothy's mother. Here again we have to pass over a whole bookful of exclamations and explanations. Mrs. Clare was not so much inclined to see what an exquisite joke it was as some of the others. The very kissings and embraces the anxious mother bestowed on her little girl would take at least a week to set down. Then when Mr. Clare, who had been on a journey to Boston, came back at seven o'clock, the story of cousin Bevis and Dorothy had to be told once more from beginning to end. If the two had been to the aquarium, to see the wild beasts in the park; if they had had a luncheon at Delmonico's, and a drive in the hansom cab, there could have been no more to tell, and certainly people would not have

been half as much interested and amused as they were now. Dorothy could n't quite understand why everybody applauded her pluck. She had simply sat still as cousin Bevis had told her to do, and waited for him to come back. Nobody thought of blaming cousin Bevis; for when a man has sat in a library all his life, busy over lists and catalogues of books, and has never had wife or child, why, he cannot be expected all at once to assume the responsibilities of a father of a family. Besides, cousin Bevis was interested in his garden. But, above all, cousin Bevis was one of those people that you take as you find them, and are happy that you get them at all.

It was not until Dorothy was sitting before the fire between her father and mother that night just before going to bed that she told the real story of the day,—that is, the story about Jinny.

And now here it was next day, Saturday. Instead of its being a sunny morning, with a warm wind blowing that made one feel as if all the garden seeds ought to be planted, the spring house-cleaning finished, and all one's spring clothes in readiness, as yesterday had, a snow-storm had set in. Yet, nevertheless, Dorothy,

in a mackintosh and tam-o'-shanter, rubbers and leggings, with her boxes of peppermints and chocolates, and Toby, had come to spend the morning with the Nicoll children, and, as we have already heard, was recounting her adventures.

Toby, we must explain without waiting for the other introductions, was Dorothy's dog, and had been given to her by cousin Bevis on her tenth birthday. Toby's name was actually Uncle Toby; but really, to call a dog one's uncle seems a sort of joke, and Toby was such a serious dog one did not venture to joke with him, so he was usually simply Toby. He was a Skye terrier of a very fine breed, and his troubled, anxious eyes looked through a tangle of silky hair. He knew too much, Toby did. He saw too far into things, and it made him melancholy. He was always called a wonderfully intelligent dog, and when Dorothy wished to give instances of his remarkable sagacity, she would hide her handkerchief, or slipper, or what not, and tell Toby to find it. It was considered nothing short of miraculous that Toby knew exactly where to go and look for the article. Toby was not puffed up by the praise he received, however. He considered such performances quite too trivial,

and after he had been flattered and patted on the head, it was his way to half hide himself under a chair, droop his head and ears, and look sulky. For naturally knowing as much as people to begin with, and with a dog's nose, eyes, and instinct added, what was it to find a handkerchief?

Toby had a bed on a cushion just outside Dorothy's room. Of course, being a little girl, *she* went to bed early, and, just to please her, Toby permitted Dorothy to think that when she had put on his nightgown and nightcap he went to bed as well. Nothing of the sort. He could n't possibly go to sleep until the grown-ups downstairs put their lights out and themselves went to bed. They did n't seem to realize that Toby had the care of the house on his mind, and sometimes, particularly when guests came in, they sat up very late. At such times, after standing it as long as he could, Toby would go down to see about it. It used to astonish Mr. and Mrs. Clare's visitors very much to see a dog appear in a nightgown and nightcap. It was his way, too, to single out some particular gentleman or lady, and sitting down on his hind legs before him or her to open his mouth and yawn, look up in his or her face

and yawn again and again. Very few people had the strength of mind to stay after receiving so broad a hint, so that finally Toby could go to sleep in comfort. We may as well say just here that Toby had n't approved of Dorothy's going to New York without him the day before. He had known that no good would come of it. All day long he had lain in a cape of hers that he had dragged off a nail. He was in better spirits to-day, although he detested snowstorms, and did n't like being wet. When he first came in he had stood quite disgusted, extending first one paw and then another for the rectory children to wipe dry. Toby knew very well that both Peggy and Emily considered it a great privilege to wait on him.

Having introduced Toby, we must go on and introduce the four rectory children to whom Dorothy was talking and offering bonbons as she sat on a stool before the fire with Toby at her feet in the big bare room they called the schoolroom. First came Tish (short for Letitia), who was twelve years old and had a grown-up sort of look and manner. This came partly from the fact that she wore glasses, and partly because, on account of Mrs. Nicoll's being a great deal of an invalid, Tish kept house, looked

after the children, made coffee and tea at table, and attended to the poor of the parish. Next to her came Jem, who was of Dorothy's age, a solid, round little fellow, with a chubby, freckled face, bright brown eyes, and a chin with a dimple. Tish's greatest responsibility was the keeping Jem in order. It was so necessary, she was always telling him, that they should set a good example in the parish. Jem hated to set an example. He did n't set an example any more than he was obliged to. He submitted to be washed and to have his hair brushed (it was the sort of hair that stood straight up and that no amount of brushing would make stay down). He had to be put into stiff sailor collars; to sit still; to seem to listen to talk, to listen to sermons. But what he was thinking of was of what he was going to do when he had a chance; hunt buffaloes in the orchard, shoot alligators in the tank.

Luckily Jem was of a mechanical turn and was always constructing and reconstructing a steam-engine; and taking it to pieces and putting it together again, as he was doing to-day, was entertainment of a high order. He had a little track for it on the rear lawn, which skirted the garden and crossed the laundry yard, and on

which they all took excursions in pleasant weather. There were different stations which they called London, Paris, Rome, where they all pretended to get out of the train and buy sandwiches. Sometimes accidents happened just as they do on real railroads; sometimes the engine stopped midway beyond London and Paris, and nothing could induce it to budge an inch.

Jem had had a brother just eleven months younger than himself; he was called Bevis (for Mrs. Nicoll had been a Bevis and was a cousin of the Bevises). They had had good times, Jem and Bevis, playing together, sleeping together, getting up together, always talking about the wonderful things they were going to do when they were through breakfast. Then one day Jem had to play alone, for Bevis was not well. "I think I can go out to-morrow, can't I, mother?" Bevis kept saying every day for a week, when Jem came to listen at the door. Jem was very busy getting ready all sorts of new games and treats for Bevis when he did come out; but when Jem saw his brother again the little fellow's hands were folded on his breast and were so white and clean any one could have told that Bevis had had no games to play for a long while, and would never play again.

Often and often afterwards, when Jem was playing the old games alone, he thought of Bevis with a smarting of the eyes. Even nowadays when Jem had something he liked very much, there was a queer little wrench of pain in him somewhere to feel that Bevis was not there to share it.

Peggy was six years old. She had a round, merry face like Jem's, so full of freckles that you had almost to look behind them to see what a nice little face it was. Her hair was bright red and her eyes bright blue, always dancing with fun. Nothing ever disturbed Peggy ; she loved everything and everybody, liked to do anything and everything. Mr. Nicoll used to say that Peggy was the daughter he expected to take care of him in his old age ; which speech rather hurt the feelings of Tish, since Tish considered that she already took excellent care of everybody ; of her mother, of her father, who lost his glasses and mislaid his handkerchief, not to say of Jem and Peggy herself. But the comfort of Peggy was that she was always radiantly happy.

Little Emily had had her third birthday, and had asked half a dozen times a week ever since when she would be four, for she wanted another birthday with another cake and four

candles. Emily had a sweet little pale face, with an occasional bit of pink on each cheek; her eyes were hazel and had a dreamy expression; her fine yellow fluffy hair stood off her head like a nimbus. Little Emily had not fully alighted yet on this earth, seemed not quite to have made up her mind whether she had come to stay or not. She tried hard to study into the meaning of things. "Please to explain," she would say, but the explanation failed always quite to satisfy her. She seemed always to be waiting, listening, expecting something that did not come. At table, when the other children fell hungrily upon their food, she looked at hers as though she wanted something else. When she was brought to accept her bread and milk, she ate it with a slightly surprised air. She was fond of going about out-of-doors; but no matter how many times she had been over a road, she had an air of walking in a strange country. She loved a garden, and above all the Bevis's old-fashioned garden. She would walk there round and round the borders, examining one blossom after the other, but seemed always to be searching for some particular flower that she could not find. She could n't quite tell whether it was a pink or a white or a blue flower she wanted, but was sure

she could find it if she went on exploring the next path: sometimes she actually thought that she had found it, so sat down beside it with an air of supreme contentment; then after a while would be heard to say, "No, this is n't the flower either."

Emily had listened with open mouth to Dorothy's account of Jinny, but wanted more particular information.

"I don't understand," she said. "Please to explain."

"You see, dear," said Tish, "it was a naughty bad girl, a very naughty bad girl indeed, who ran off with Dorothy's money."

"Was it a whole twenty-five cent piece?" inquired Emily.

"A whole twenty-five cent piece," said Peggy.

"And she never came back?" Emily asked again.

"No, she never came back."

"I wish I could run off with somebody's twenty-five cent piece and never come back," said Emily with an air of unusual excitement.

Tish at once began a little sermon on the wickedness of such doings and such sayings, particularly when a little girl belonged to the family of a clergyman and had to set an example to all the parish.

"I wish," said Emily, raising her voice a little and speaking more distinctly, "I wish I could run off with somebody's twenty-five cents and never come back no more."

Even Jem was rather horrified at such sentiments and reached out his hand to pull Emily's ear affectionately.

"Take your hand off my cheek," said little Emily imperiously, for she always objected to being touched.

"Why, Emily, it's only Jem."

"Take your hand off my cheek, I say."

"Why, don't you love me, Emily?"

"Oh, yes, I do love you, Jem," Emily admitted.

"But you mustn't say that you want to run off with anybody's twenty-five cent piece."

"I should like to very much," little Emily insisted, quite unmoved.

"She's such a little thing," said Peggy, apologizing for such singular doctrines from a member of a clergyman's family. "She isn't old enough to know any better."

"Oh, yes," said Emily, "I'm old enough to know better, but I should like to run off with somebody's twenty-five cents."

"Dorothy," Peggy exclaimed, "I think that

Jinny fell down and lost your money and did n't dare come back to tell you."

"Why, Peggy," Dorothy cried with a sudden illumination coming into her face, "I think so too!"

CHAPTER III

EMILY'S SUNBONNET

THAT Saturday snowstorm, instead of belating the spring, seemed actually to hurry it along. The sun shone in a different fashion after it had cleared up, and the snow soon felt that it had better melt as quickly as possible, for the grass was growing green underneath it, and crocuses and snowdrops thought nothing at all of pushing up through it and blossoming as if it were not there. The sign, "No more cold waves this year," seemed to have been put up by Mother Nature. Robins had come in numbers and sang on the bare branches of the trees, and if you did not see the bluebirds and white-throated sparrows, you heard their carols.

Mr. Bevis, having planted his garden peas and sweet peas before the snow set in, could sleep o' nights as long as it lasted. But the moment it had melted and the grass began to grow green in spots and the buds on the trees and shrubs were swelling, his busy time began

again. He was not only going to run the garden and place, but keep bees this summer; then, too, there was a beautiful little Alderney calf to be looked after; and when one reflected how much cousin Bevis had on his mind that spring, nobody could think of blaming him for dropping little girls in a corner of the waiting-room and leaving them there all day.

Mr. Bevis was fifty-two years old, and had spent all his time since he was twenty-three in a great library in New York, turning over musty folios, poking into dusty alcoves, going up and down ladders, and making catalogues by a wonderful system, so that no matter how many thousand books you had you could put your hand on precisely the volume you needed even in the dark. Having worked out this theory, he had no head or eyes or health left, and the doctor said he must give up all work and go live in the country.

"In that case," said Miss Rachel Bevis, who was remarkable for good sense, "why should n't we open the house at High Elms?"

It is n't everybody who has a comfortable old family place ready and waiting for them, but the Bevises had. The Bevis place at High Elms dated back to the year 1699, when

Thomas Bevis came over from England, bought a piece of land and built a house for himself. His son, Thomas Bevis, was a boy of fifteen at the time; six years later he married, and then Thomas Bevis, senior, built another house about forty feet or so from his own for the young married couple. In 1740, when Thomas Bevis, junior, succeeded to the property, his idea being that one whole thing is better than two halves, he threw the two houses into one, connecting them by roofing over the intervening space between them and putting rooms underneath. On the first floor they made one very large room which was called the garden-room partly because it opened directly upon the garden, and partly because in winter the oranges, lemons, and palms, in tubs, as well as the roses and jessamines, were put there.

This is the plan of the Bevis house:—

Laundry	Kitchen	Pantry	Dining-room	Sitting-room	Garden-room	Hall	Parlor	Library
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Anybody can see at a glance that this is the proper way to build a house; for all the windows on the east looked out on the beautiful green lawn, with its fine oak, tulip, and beech

trees, besides the great General Washington chestnut-tree, which grew chestnuts of the most marvelous size ; and on the west, upon the old flower-garden, where grew every flower that ever was heard of. A straight, broad path led from the big glass doors of the garden-room to a round flower-bed ; around this ran a narrow path, which diverged into other little paths and led to others still. This was the garden where little Emily liked to wander ; Dorothy as well. For if you lost yourself you were sure to find something else delightful : a mound blue with forget-me-nots and a pear-tree in the centre ; a summer-house all covered over with wistaria ; a wilderness of syringa bushes with tall spires of foxgloves keeping sentinel about their roots ; beds of violets, and banks where rosemary, lavender, and thyme grew. Certain flowers seemed to prefer to hide themselves in these quiet out-of-the-way places, where they could bring up their families year after year without being bothered by a gardener.

Between this flower-garden and the orchard came the rose-garden, where all sorts of roses grew in profusion, but especially damask roses. Now in the time of their grandmother Bevis, as Miss Rachel remembered, these damask

roses were gathered to put in the great rose-jars which stood in the garden-room, and Miss Rachel had promised Dorothy that she and the other children should help her pick the roses when just the right day came in June. Dorothy and Tish were already looking forward to it.

The Bevis family, as we have seen, had belonged to High Elms since early colonial days. Dorothy Deane had been born in New York; then when she was five years old she was taken to Swallowfield to live with her great grandmother and her aunt. Her father was dead and her mother, not having any money but what she earned by teaching, had to be away from her most of the time. It was just before Dorothy's ninth birthday that her mother was married to Mr. Clare and they all came to live at High Elms. How wonderful it was altogether!—for Dorothy to have her mother always close at hand; to have the lovely face bending over her the last thing at night; to wake up and find it smiling at her in the morning; to go down to breakfast and sit between her mother and this surprising new father!

“Mamma,” Dorothy was obliged to confess at the end of a week, “I am afraid I love papa almost as much as I love you.”

“Love him just as much as you can,” said Mrs. Clare. “He is so good it would be hard to love him enough. You cannot possibly love him too much.”

Dorothy was contented after that to love both father and mother with all her heart. She did miss the old life at Swallowfield: somehow, grandmamma and Aunt Hester had been a part of her heart and soul and conscience, and she was always wondering what they would say to things. Then, when they finally came to High Elms for a fortnight's visit, she heard what they did say about her neat little room with its brass bedstead and its blue and white furnishings, about the pleasant house generally, and High Elms altogether. As to Dorothy's old Swallowfield playmates, Marcia Dundas, the Lee twins, and Flossy and Carlo, — even to this day Dorothy had a queer little lump in her throat when she thought of them. But they were all (except, of course, Carlo and Flossy, — who would ever think of inviting dogs to pay a visit!) to come to see her this summer.

But this chapter is about the Bevises, and is to explain how it happened that when Mr. Clare married he had come to High Elms to live.

High Elms is, of course, a very quiet, pleasant old town, which lies just where the Rosemary River grows wide before emptying itself into Long Island Sound. The place is called High Elms because the streets are all shaded by tall elm-trees. But although High Elms may be the pleasantest place in the world, the real attraction for Mr. Clare was that the Bevises lived there, also the Nicolls; for both families were Mr. Clare's cousins, and in the Bevis family cousinship counts.

Mr. Bevis and his sister had both been born in the Bevis house, but afterwards had lived chiefly in New York. The house was theirs, but their cousins, the Frank Bevises, had lived there until about the time Dorothy went to High Elms, when they had built a house for themselves at Belfield, and left the old place empty and ready for the rightful owners. When Miss Rachel had visited her grandmother in her girlhood, it had been her feeling that it was the queerest, most inconvenient, most ill-arranged old house in the world, and that the wisest course would be to tear it down and build a brand-new one, with a mansard roof and all things modern. Since then the fashion of the brand-new had gone out and that of everything

colonial had come in, and to live in the house your ancestors had built was in itself a distinction, besides being a joy. The fact that when anybody knocked at the huge brass knocker on the great Dutch door it was necessary for the maid to go through all the rooms in order to open the door, now seemed "so delightfully quaint." To be quaint, to be queer, to be old-fashioned, was Miss Bevis's ambition. She was fitting up one room to be really "antique," and her idea was to fill the whole house with genuine old furniture. Dorothy had spent whole days with Miss Rachel rummaging in the garret, where were packed away the belongings of the dead and buried Bevises.

If Miss Rachel had had a swelling of pride in taking possession of her ancestral chairs, tables, and candlesticks, what shall we say of the incessant delightful surprise of the experience of coming to live in the country to Mr. Bevis? When they had arrived on a May-day of the year before the opening of our story, there was a gush of blue violets everywhere and the grass on the great lawn under the oaks and tulip-trees, which had been cut and rolled and trodden for almost two hundred years, until it was as soft and fine as velvet, was all dotted over with pink and white daisies.

“Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow’r,” somehow came into Mr. Bevis’s mind, and in an instant the mists were rubbed from his eyes, and he seemed suddenly to wake up to the joy of the created world. Here was the miracle going on before his eyes! Of course he had, in a hazy sort of way, known that things grew, — not only flowers, but potatoes, corn, beans, tomatoes. But to see them do it!

Timothy Truett had been gardener and caretaker of the place for twenty years, and that summer they were Timothy Truett’s vegetables that Mr. Bevis watched and wondered over. It was so inexhaustibly interesting that potatoes grew in the ground, while tomatoes expanded in the sunlight. Then both blossomed in mid-air, — what a curious difference that one developed its fruit at the head and the other at the roots! Then beans and peas, although alike in some particulars, really turned out so differently. And they all knew how to do it without any instruction.

“Each after his kind,” Mr. Bevis would say to Dorothy, for whom he had instantly developed a strong liking.

They used to pick vegetables together that first summer. You should have seen them dig

the early potatoes. Cousin Bevis was what his sister called "a fine, scholarly-looking man;" that is, she had called him so in the old days. When working in the garden he wore, by the doctor's orders, blue glasses and a wide-brimmed panama straw hat and, for comfort's sake, a striped suit of linen, with a funny little jacket. In this array he avoided the fair sex in general, but Dorothy he welcomed, and, as I said before, you should have seen them digging early potatoes with a trowel, mining and countermining before approaching the hill in their anxiety to find the large ones and not to injure the growth of the smaller potatoes. Then how pleasant it was to gather crooked-necked squashes. Under the great leaves there was such a soft green-gold light. And to see the great yellow blossoms changing before their eyes into yellow squashes! It was extraordinary how they did it.

"Here is one that is half a squash and half a flower, cousin Bevis," said Dorothy, flat on the ground, looking in from one side of the vine, while Mr. Bevis, with his blue glasses and his panama hat, gazed in from the other.

"Why, it's a sort of vegetable mermaid," he returned. "Instead of being half woman and half fish it's half flower and half squash."

"Now if we were fairies," Dorothy went on, "if we were really fairies, cousin Bevis, we would live here under the squash vines, wouldn't we?"

"Indeed we would,—sleep in the squash blossom itself."

"It is such a lovely green sunshine," Dorothy pursued.

"And even if it rained we shouldn't know it," said cousin Bevis.

Anybody could see that the two were great friends, even in that first summer of their acquaintance. Now all winter long Mr. Bevis had been reading treatises on gardening, and intended this summer to be able to say, "*I* planted those potatoes;" "*I* raised those beans, peas, squashes, and tomatoes." It had been Miss Rachel's suggestion that a row of beehives would just suit a shady part of the place, and Mr. Bevis had gone enthusiastically into the idea, and by the third week in April, just when the pollen was thick on the willows and maples, and the crocuses were blossoming in the garden, the three beehives and the colonies of Italian bees came and took possession.

The children all went over to see the bees and the calf one Saturday morning that is, the

girls. Jem was helping Captain Narraway put his boats in order. The calf was a beautifully marked little creature, a pure Alderney, with great soft eyes. They found it tethered at the extremity of the lawn. Miss Rachel would have liked to give the pretty creature the freedom of the place, but as Mr. Bevis had peas, lettuce, and potatoes up, and as he spent most of his time looking for the crack in the ground which would foretell the coming up of his beans, etc., he wanted all dangerous enemies kept at a distance. So they drove the stake in a pleasant place, and gave the calf a long rope, hoping she would not pine in her captivity. She was very ingenious in her way of managing that rope. Sometimes she would go round and round the stake in circles until she had wound it all up neatly, and could not herself move another inch. Again, she would entangle her own legs in it and lasso her neck, as it were, and be pulled down and lie struggling. But best of all, she liked to twist herself and the rope into a bush.

She was very glad to see the visitors coming, and Miss Rachel was glad of the opportunity to let the calf loose, so that she might have a little innocent recreation while the children were there to watch her. She flung up her heels and her

tail, and scampered round and round; then drawing near Peggy and Emily, who stood hand in hand in their little white sunbonnets watching the antics, she put down her head and uttered a plaintive "moo, moo, moo."

Emily gazed back in surprise.

"I don't think," she said thoughtfully, "I don't think I understand the language. Please to explain."

"Oh, she's just glad to see you," Peggy explained.

Emily put out her hands to the calf.

"I am very glad to see you," she replied, addressing the calf politely; but when the calf came near and began to lick her hand Emily did n't quite like it.

"I did n't want my hand eaten up," she said to Dorothy, who was trying to introduce Toby to the calf, but could n't persuade Toby to be on good behavior.

"No, let's find some grass and bits of clover," Dorothy suggested.

The calf liked the grass and clover very much, especially from Emily's hand.

"What's your name?" Emily inquired. "Is it just moo-moo?"

The calf would say nothing else.

“Cousin Bevis,” she now demanded, “what’s the calf’s name?”

“Sister Rachel wants to call her Juno,” replied cousin Bevis, who, in his wide-brimmed hat and blue glasses, had come from the garden to see the children. “But I don’t see what’s the use of a name. Nobody took any trouble to give me a name; why must I go round hunting up names for four-footed beasts and fowls of the air?”

“Why, cousin Bevis,” said Peggy, “hav’n’t you got a name?”

“I’m Bevis Bevis, if you call that a name. Suppose you were Nicoll Nicoll, — just think of it! How ridiculous it would be! I suppose the thing of it was that my sponsors in baptism had no imagination. When the clergyman said ‘Name this child,’ one would have thought that some simple name like Jehoshaphat or Nebuchadnezzar might have risen to their minds. But no, they could think of nothing but Bevis, so they went on multiplying it, — Bevis Bevis. Why they didn’t put it in for a middle name, too, I never could understand. Bevis Bevis Bevis! The thing would seem to have been insisted on. But there’s no distinction at all about simple Bevis Bevis.”

"I think," said Dorothy, "I like Bevis Bevis better than Jehoshaphat or Nebuchadnezzar."

"They might have put those in for middle names," said Mr. Bevis, "and had Zachariah or plain Zachary for the first name."

"Zachary Jehoshaphat Nebuchadnezzar Bevis," repeated Dorothy, as if trying the sound. "I don't think I quite like it."

"Let's call the calf Nebuchadnezzar," said Tish, who knew things. "She seems to like to eat grass."

"Nebuchadnezzar she shall be," declared Mr. Bevis. "Sister Rachel ought not to introduce heathen goddesses here. Now come and see my bees."

It was no easy matter to persuade Emily to leave the calf, with whom she had established a friendship. And even when Dorothy (who had taken up Toby on her arm for fear the bees might take a fancy to settle on him) led her to the hives, she looked for a minute in disgust at the yellow bees that, all covered with pollen, were flying and creeping about, and then stole away. Mr. Bevis had sat for hours observing the bees; he knew all their ways; every kind of buzz had its distinct meaning. He had first studied up the bee in Virgil, then in the scien-

tific books, then in the handbooks to Bee Culture, and it might have seemed as if what cousin Bevis did n't know about bees could n't be worth knowing. He had told Dorothy a great deal already, and every new thing he learned, and these were many, must he give to her. This very morning certain new and surprising facts had been acquired, and cousin Bevis waxed eloquent. He told such wonderful instances of the wisdom of these little creatures; their patience, their faithfulness, their thoroughness, it did really seem as if we poor human beings, who never know our own minds, who when we do, make mistakes and go bungling along doing just the thing we ought not to do all our lives, might as well give up our places to these really superior creatures, who would know how to carry on the larger affairs of the world just as they manage their hives. Dorothy and Tish and Peggy were all so intensely interested that they had not noticed the fact that Emily had run away; if they had they would have supposed she was with cousin Rachel.

But presently Dorothy heard a bark from Toby, then another. Toby had a great many different tones to his bark; this one was a note of indignation. Dorothy did not like to inter-

rupt cousin Bevis, but when Toby's barking became louder and more indignant, she had to say: —

“Oh, cousin Bevis, please excuse me; I must see what Toby is barking about.”

She ran towards the east lawn, and the others followed. As she approached Toby came towards her with an anxious expression. Well he might. Emily stood bareheaded under a tree, holding out the last bit of her sunbonnet to the calf, who had eaten up all the rest.

“Why, Emily,” cried Peggy, “your beautiful new sunbonnet!”

“Why, Emily,” said Tish, “how could you do such a thing?”

“I liked to do it very much,” replied Emily. “He (indicating the calf), he liked it, too.”

This incident put an end to their calling June Nebuchadnezzar.

CHAPTER IV

CATCHING SHAD

CAPTAIN MILES NARRAWAY was one of Jem's most particular friends, and at the time of the year when Jem was missing from the school-room, the garret, or the lawn, Tish would say, "Jem must be down helping cap'n," and they would all set off for the shore. The girls liked to go there almost as much as did Jem, for where "the cap'n" was, something was always doing, — something interesting was going on. In the spring the important matter was to get his three boats in order; a sail-boat (also called a cat-boat), a largish row-boat, and the skiff. When these were uncovered and hauled down to the bank of the creek, everybody at High Elms knew that spring had fairly set in. Every morning of the year the captain strolled toward the dock, looked up the river, down the harbor, gave a squint of the eye to the way the flag was flying, and everything going on between earth and sky was at once apparent to him. March

might come in like a lamb, might frolic gently all the month ; other men along shore eager to be beforehand might haul their boats up, lay them on their sides and begin to caulk their blistering seams. But the captain was not to be made an April fool of by a belated snowstorm and freeze that would take all the gloss off his new paint.

Just at the right moment, however, his two larger boats, which had lain bottom side up ever since the middle of November well packed down with sedge, were uncovered. At the same moment the skies grew bland, the water grew blue, the winds grew soft, the grass grew green, and early shad began to go up the river. These were the days when Jem was often missing ; when smears of different colors appeared on his jacket and knickerbockers, which kept Tish hard at work extracting them with a bottle of turpentine. Then his hands !

However, Dr. Nicoll had once been a boy himself, and he knew that when spring comes a boy *must* do something different from what he has been doing all winter. Everybody knew that Jem was helping Captain Narraway paint his boats ; still Tish liked to make sure her boy was not in mischief, and on most afternoons late in

April she and Dorothy and Peggy and Emily, sometimes even the nurse and Bun the baby too, would go down and watch Jem help "the cap'n."

Dorothy loved going to the water. At Swallowfield there had been a river called the Swallow; a pretty little river that rippled softly over shining stones in its swift course or meandered quietly through the meadows, the sort of a river one might put in one's pocket as it were (except in the spring freshets). The Rosemary was a river of a very different sort. Here near its mouth it was like an arm of the sea. Dorothy loved to gaze across the gleaming broad waters at the opposite shores; away to the north where it flowed beneath bridges, then down the harbor to the open sound, where great ships and steamers passed and you could see the blue shores of Long Island. She liked the sight of the boats lying in the creek, the masts of the fishing and coasting craft pointing all sorts of ways; she loved to watch the men handling them. But the really exciting thing about the shore was to watch the tides that were always in or out, going up or down.

"Is it high tide to-day, Cap'n Narraway?" she would ask, or, "Is it going to be high tide soon?" or "I'm sure it's almost low tide now."

That any man, woman, or child, the moment their eyes fell on a boat at anchor, could n't tell from the way it swung whether it was flood, ebb, or slack tide, was to Captain Narraway the most convincing proof of their foolishness. Hence it amused him very much to have Dorothy so interested in the matter, so surprised at what happened every day like the sun's rising. Usually, to the captain, the test of a wise man or a fool was whether he knew or did not know the rig of every boat that floated, the name of every rope and spar and tackle. Once Captain Narraway had had a man in his boat who thought the "sheet" was the sail; and who when ordered to make fast the "peak halyards" had n't the least idea what the peak halyards were. The captain always referred to him afterward as "that dum idiot." But the captain felt there was excuse for Dorothy; for when one came to think of it, how was a little girl who had lived in a benighted place, where there was nothing but fresh water, to be expected to know whether the tide was in or out? Thus Dorothy, not being so old but she might learn and not so dull but she could learn, had not lost the captain's favor. Indeed, Captain Narraway had some idea of painting her name on his sail-boat; for

when he had remarked one day to Mr. Bevis, who had come down to the shore to see if they were taking shad yet, that he was tired of putting on that same old name "Water Witch," "Call her the Dorothea," Mr. Bevis suggested.

"Right you are," said the captain, really quite pleased. "She shall be the Dorothea."

"Of course," Mr. Bevis explained, "Dorothea is not to take it as if we really meant it. Not but that I myself like Dorothea, that is, a little; for how could anybody like a little girl only a few feet high and inches broad, much? If Dorothea were six feet tall and three feet wide, why then one might get up a really huge liking for her. As it is, she is just a little thing, and we like her just a little."

Dorothy, hearing this, decided in her own mind that she was contented to be liked just a little. She could n't stretch herself out to such monstrous possibilities as being liked six feet tall and three feet broad.

Captain Narraway had known Mr. Bevis as a boy and, as cousin Bevis told Dorothy, had taught him how to swim, how to manage a boat, how to know his right hand from his left, in fact, all he knew that was worth knowing. So it was not strange that Mr. Bevis also liked to

take a stroll to the shore, just to straighten his back after bending it double in the garden. Captain Narraway always asked how the garden was getting on. He had little faith in anything on land: moth and dust crept in; there were earthquakes; in fact, one never could tell what would happen on shore. When a man ploughs the ground his planting and watering may or may not be rewarded. When his boat ploughs the sea, without planting or watering he finds what he is after, and is sure of his breakfast, dinner, and supper all the year round. Still, not to discourage Mr. Bevis, he would say, —

“Peas up, hey?”

Then Mr. Bevis would answer, his face dimpling with smiles, “Oh, yes, I’ve got three crops of peas up.”

“Beans, tomatoes, and corn up, hey?”

“Now, cap’n,” cousin Bevis would reply with a comfortable air of superior knowledge, “you may know a thing or two, but you don’t know everything. Beans, tomatoes, and corn are tender vegetables. We don’t want them to come up till there’s no more chance of frost.”

“You don’t say!” Captain Narraway would reply with hearty admiration. “Of course I know there’s a difference in the run of shad

whether the season is late or early, and I s'pose it's the same with beans." Then, with a twinkle of the eye, "Tim Truett jealous any of your bossing the job?"

Mr. Bevis chuckled slightly. "Truett and I had a talk," he explained, "and struck a bargain. I told him I had been reading a good deal in garden manuals this winter, and that it seemed to me I might like to carry out some of the new ideas. I remarked to him that the old haphazard ways were going out and the new scientific methods were coming in. Truett took it very well. He said he had for years wanted more time to attend to the grass and the small fruit. 'Now them currant bushes don't look as the currant bushes on a gentleman's place ought to look,' said he. I agreed with him. He is to run the strawberry bed, look after raspberries, blackberries, pears, and apples, cut the grass, attend to the stable, and drive Miss Bevis when she wants to go out. Also, two afternoons every week he is to look after the flower garden. The vegetable garden is mine," Mr. Bevis concluded with an air of triumph; then added with another chuckle, "I see Truett looking at me over the fence sometimes."

Mr. Bevis had come down to get a shad for his

supper and had found the girls looking on while Captain Narraway and Jem finished the row-boat, which was painted white just touched with green. As soon as this last coat of paint was dry, Captain Narraway was going down to Half Moon beach after a load of sand, and had promised to take the children with him. "In a week's time," he thought the boat would be fit. A whole week ! Why, the paint looked almost dry now, and by to-morrow or next day —

"About the end of the next week," the captain said again ; and then leaving the boat hanging neatly on its davits and putting his paint-pots into a safe place, he led the way to the water with Jem and Dorothy, while Mr. Bevis, holding Emily by the hand, followed with Tish and Peggy.

Although the day was beautifully clear, there was a strong east wind, and the bright dancing current that was running up with wind and tide behind it brought the clear salt smell of the deeper sea. How the wind made one's face tingle ! Not with cold but with life. How beautiful the great strong river was with a glitter like steel across it ! Half a dozen men were stationed at different points along the shore holding the seine in their hands, others in boats were rowing

across the gleaming waters towards the floaters that were bobbing up and down ; the men were about to draw the net, for the tide was almost at the flood.

Jem had darted forward as soon as he saw the fishermen, and stood at the end of the floating dock, looking on with an air of deep interest while he held one ear to listen the better to the various shouts and calls which came loud and full, yet curiously indistinct and meaningless to the girls, who wanted to be as much "in it" as Jem and understand just as well as he seemed to what was going on.

"What was that Sam Perkins called, Jem?" Tish inquired, her spectacled little face all puckered up with interest.

"What was it he called, please, Jem?" Dorothy said imploringly.

"What did he say, Jem? Tell us," insisted Peggy.

"I don't hear," said Emily. "Please explain."

"He said 'All right,'" replied Jem, with the air of a man interrupted in serious business.

"He said 'All right,'" Tish said to Dorothy.

"He just said 'All right,'" Dorothy observed

to Peggy, with an air of throwing a flood of light on the subject.

“ ‘All right,’ ” Peggy passed it on to Emily.

“What does ‘all right,’ mean!” demanded Emily with indignation. “Please explain.”

“I wondered what it meant, too,” Dorothy now confessed humbly. “What does it mean, please, Jem?”

“Sam Perkins just simply meant it was ‘all right.’ ”

“But *what* was all right?” insisted Tish.

“*Can’t you see what is going on before your eyes?*” thundered Jem. “I should suppose that even a girl could tell that when it’s all right it’s time to pull.”

“Oh, yes, I see now,” said Tish, beaming. “Time to pull.”

“I ought to have known,” faltered Dorothy. “Of course it’s time to pull.”

“Time to pull what?” said Emily. “Please explain.”

“Time to pull in fish, you goosey,” replied Peggy.

“Goosey yourself,” growled Jem. “Time to pull to the next stake.”

The wonderful thing was that while the men on shore seemed to the girls simply to be run-

ning up and down, and making wild gestures, and calling to the men rowing here and there across the water, shouting, "Hello!" "Hello!" "Here," "Hold on," "Let go," "Easy now," as if they were at their wits' end, Jem saw some sort of method in their madness; understood what it meant, not only understood, but once in an emergency helped by calling in a voice like a trumpet, "Hold up your end; don't let go, Sam Perkins."

Really, what Jem did n't know was n't worth knowing. But, after all, when you cannot for the life of you think what is going to happen next, it is all the more exciting. There were the men in boats and the men on shore, pulling a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together. The blocks moved; hand over hand came in the great seine, with here and there a rainbow glint in the bubbles it made, and flakes of white foam. And more wonderful yet was the flashing and glittering of something that lived and moved and struggled inside the meshes of the net. The men were cheering at the top of their voices. Jem flung up his cap and cheered too. Captain Narraway had himself gone up the bank to put his hand to the tackle and help pull in. It was the most tremendous haul of fish

there had been that season, — indeed, for years. Again the men all shouted like mad as they tugged afresh, dragging the net far enough up the beach to make it safe to uncover the fish.

“What are those things?” said Emily, as she stood holding Peggy by one hand and Dorothy by the other. “Please explain.”

“Those things” were leaping up in the air as if they had wings, flopping together in heaps, jumping and flapping, and all the time flashing like silver, flashing like gold, flashing like rubies and emeralds in the afternoon sunshine.

“Why, Emily dear,” said Dorothy, “they are shad; they are what we have to eat.”

“The same like what we have on a big platter for supper?” inquired Emily, with wonder growing on wonder. “Why, I never saw them jump like that before.”

The girls were all following cousin Bevis and Jem up the beach to see the men clear the net of the shining piles of fish.

“Oh, cousin Bevis,” whispered Dorothy, “do you think they like it?” For now, besides the lovely colors playing on the scales of the fish, she could see the rapid motion of the gills, as if they were breathing out their life too fast. It put her in pain.

“Ah, that’s the question, whether they mind it much,” said cousin Bevis. “But at any rate, they’re likely to make a good many people happy, for we are all going to have them for supper.”

Without doubt, the fishermen were happy. They were emptying the water out of their boots; they were red in the face with the salt wind; they were clapping their hands to warm them, all the time joking with each other, and watching Captain Narraway, whom they had asked to be umpire, and who was sorting out the fish into nine piles; just so many of the biggest into each; just so many of the medium size; just so many of the smallest.

“All right?” asked Captain Narraway, when his task was finished.

“All righty,” shouted the fishermen, with a cheer.

“Here, Jem,” called Captain Narraway, “turn face about and look at the vane on the Meeting-house steeple.”

Jem faced about until he saw the vane on the steeple of the Congregational church.

“Now then, Jem,” said Captain Narraway, “whose is this lot?”

“Sam Perkins’s,” replied Jem.

"Sam Perkins's it is. Whose is this?"

"Ben Coe's."

"Ben Coe's it is. And this?"

"Ned DeForrest's."

"Ned DeForrest's it is."

And so on until each of the nine fishermen had his lot, and had planted his foot in front of his pile of fish. The girls nodded admiringly, as Jem, without a moment's hesitation or fumbling, called the roll. They felt very proud of Jem.

"Well now, my men," said Mr. Bevis, "I want four of the biggest shad here. On the whole, I'll take five."

Good cousin Bevis! Two for himself, one for supper and one for breakfast; two for the rectory and one for the Clares. Not even five were enough! Finally he took one from each man, and ordered them sent around with his compliments, — one to Dr. Goodlove, one to the Misses Bonner, and so forth.

It was already approaching supper-time, so the party set off for home, cousin Bevis leading the procession, holding two shad in one hand and one in the other. Jem came next, with one in each hand; then the girls following behind, the four abreast.

"I wonder," said Dorothy, with a little sigh, still thinking of the fish, "if they do mind it very much."

"I don't care if they do," put in Emily unexpectedly. "I do hope they will hop up and down on the platter while we are at supper. I do like to see them hop up and down."

"Oh, Emily," said Peggy, "you must n't be cruel." Then she explained to the others: "She is n't old enough to know any better."

"Oh, yes," said Emily, "I'm old enough to know better, but I do love to see them hop up and down."

Peggy shook her head, but she was hungry, and was quite prepared to eat her share of the feast. The air was so keen it gave them all an appetite. It was pleasant walking home, with their supper in sight, with the sunlight shining in the tops of the trees, setting off the red blossoms of the maples, and here and there a bit of green. And on the bough of one of the great elms was a robin singing, singing, oh, so sweetly.

CHAPTER V

THE "VIKIN'S"

THE right day for the trip to Half Moon beach came at last: just the right sort of weather; just the right turn of the tide, to serve them going and coming back; then, too, it was Saturday, just the right day of the week, so that no lessons need be missed, for, of course, lessons were really the important thing. Their play was for the joy of the moment; but spelling, the multiplication table, and so on were part of the necessary equipment for a long life.

However, when one is ten or twelve years old, the days are so long one has time to do a great many things. Jem, for example, fed his rabbits and pigeons before breakfast, then when breakfast and prayers were over he found a few minutes to look at his steam-engine and see if it was in running order. Tish had to drag him away from it every morning. Jem went to school at the academy on the hill; no great

distance from home, and Jem was far from being a slow boy, yet it took him a long time to get from the rectory to the school. In certain respects Jem and Toby were not unlike. Toby never thought he could walk straight up a flight of steps. He would look at them, put up one foot, then retire, sit down and look at them again. Next he would back off half a dozen steps, then begin to run with all his might, evidently counting on the impetus thus gained to carry him up. After trying this four or five times, constantly retreating to a greater distance, Toby finally succeeded in rushing up like a small tornado.

"Such a getting upstairs," as cousin Bevis used to say. Jem also had to go through certain preliminaries before he could finally set off for school. Issuing from the rectory, he would put his foot on the gate, setting it swinging wide, then catching it on the rebound: this must be done three times. Then, outside the gate, he looked first up, next down the street, then uttered a peculiar long whistle of three notes, at the sound of which everybody within hearing knew that Jem Nicoll had started. Jem now paused, however, to see if his call was answered. If a faint echo came from the Good-

loves Jem waited, and not to be idle took out his knife and resumed the whittling of a peg for his engine until Teddy Goodlove whistled again. Teddy in sight, Jem really set off, only stopping conscientiously to jump each hitching-post. Just at the foot of Academy Hill, where the sidewalk became very level, firm, and broad, was a small hole scooped in the ground, and here there was another rest. Out came a couple of marbles; Teddy at the same moment hurried up, two of his own in hand, and without a word, by some clear mutual understanding, the two boys resumed a game left unfinished, the day before. But only for one minute. Then with a sudden prolonged "whoop" back went the marbles into the pockets, up the hill dashed the boys, and next sitting down on the bank they took out their knives and went to playing mumble-the-peg until the stroke of the bell summoned them indoors.

The girls all went to another school, and were in three divisions. Tish was a wonderful scholar; her mind bristled with exact facts, dates, tables. There was no branch of study in which Tish did not excel. Dorothy was toiling on in the class below; she was young yet. Cousin Bevis told her one day, when he

saw her over her slate, that he had never before understood what was a fraction reduced to its lowest terms. But try Dorothy in the studies she loved — geography, for example ; tell her to take ship at New York, stopping at any ports she liked on the way to Hong Kong, and really it was astonishing what a voyage she could make. She liked also to write compositions, and was trying very hard to learn to spell perfectly. Dr. Goodlove came into the school one day to hear the children recite, and he asked them if they were studying their spelling-books with all their heart and soul,

“ For,” said Dr. Goodlove, “ spelling is a very useful accomplishment. For example, yesterday I had a note asking me to go and see old Mrs. Brown (so we will call her ; she is a good patient of mine) up at Putney, for she was terribly sick with *measles*. Now, when an old lady of seventy-five has measles, it is likely to go rather hard with her. Besides, she lives with her daughter, who has a houseful of children, not one of whom has ever had the measles. So I left all my patients here at High Elms to look after themselves, took all the bottles of medicines and disinfectants I could lay my hands on, drove my horse almost to death, and reached

Putney by nine o'clock. There, sure enough, was Mrs. Brown in bed groaning and moaning. I felt her pulse, I looked at her tongue, I looked down her throat, I felt her skin, I looked into her eyes; then I said, 'Why, my good woman, I can't see a sign of measles about you.' 'Oh, no, doctor,' Mrs. Brown replied. 'I know it is n't measles, it's my rheumatics that's so bad; but Pete wrote the note and he didn't know how to spell *rheumatism*, and so he just set down *measles* instead.' "

Everybody in school laughed at this story except Dorothy. If any one had happened to look at her, it would have seemed very strange how she kept blushing deeper and deeper and getting redder and redder. Now the reason Dorothy blushed was this: Not so very long before she was writing a composition, trying to tell about a parrot sitting on a pomegranate-tree and nibbling at the fruit. But pomegranate is such a very difficult word to spell, Dorothy was afraid to grapple with it, so she put in "lemmon" instead, and had the parrot sit on a "*lemmon*" tree *a-picking at the frute*. Of course, anybody can spell a simple word like "*lemmon*." Now when Dr. Goodlove told his story about Peter, it seemed to Dorothy from the twinkle

in his eye that he knew all about her own way of getting out of a difficulty. Of course, doctors are so used to looking into people as if they were made of glass and could be seen through!

Peggy and Emily were in the kindergarten department. Of course, such little girls could not be permitted to use their brains, only their eyes and ears and hands. When they saw a picture of a cow they could make the sounds which go to make up the word; they could try to draw it, they could hear it talked about, but they could not be taught to read about it for years yet, — perhaps not until they were eight or nine years old. Thus, when it was discovered that Peggy had read through all the Rollo books, and knew the Lucy books by heart, there was a terrible outcry.

"Who taught you?" asked the teacher, quite displeased.

"Oh, nobody," said Peggy.

"But how did you learn?" demanded the teacher.

Peggy couldn't tell. She had just picked it up, she supposed. Why, even Emily knew little words.

This was against all theory, all principle,

against everything but practice. So Peggy and Emily went on playing with the idea of learning things.

Jem and Tish had five hours at school, Dorothy four, and the children three. Even five hours is only a small fraction of a day, and there was a great deal of time in these lengthening spring days for excursions on Jem's train; playing with Bevises' calf, for Juno was getting to be as frisky and playful as a dog; watching the bees; helping cousin Bevis in the garden; and hearing Miss Rachel talk about her "antique room."

But finally the day came for the trip to Half Moon Beach. The orders were to be ready to start at nine o'clock sharp Saturday morning, and the children went to bed early Friday night in order to be up in good season to pack their lunch baskets.

When they approached the dock that Saturday morning there was Captain Narraway getting in the ballast, stowing away boat-hooks, spears, and harpoons as if he were setting out on a long voyage.

"All right there!" he called as he heard the children bidding him "good-morning."

"All right here, on deck," they replied, as Jem ran down to settle the row-locks and get in the oars.

"What's in them baskets?" demanded the captain.

"Lunch," said the three girls in a chorus.

"Does lunch mean anything a man can eat?" the captain asked again.

"We've got grub enough to last two days," said Jem.

"Anything to drink?"

"Two bottles of cold boiled milk," answered Tish.

"And we've each got two oranges and there are two for you, cap'n," said Dorothy.

Captain Narraway pretended not to hear this, — which was his way when a little embarrassed by polite attentions.

"Stand back there," he called, "don't one of you dare to move an inch till I tell you."

The captain always pretended to be a little cross when they were setting out, just to show that he was the captain and must be obeyed. Everything in his boat must be shipshape. Each child must come when he called, and sit in the exact place and in the exact way he wished.

But after a little scolding because they did not skip with the lightness of a bird into the very centre of the boat, they were at last afloat,—

Tish in the stern, Dorothy and Peggy facing the captain, who of course took the middle seat, and Jem in the bow. Dorothy always trembled a little when she first entered a boat. She would never have dared tell Captain Narraway that she was afraid, for to the captain's thinking all possible dangers belong to dry land, and it is only when you have got a good strong boat between you and the water that you can reckon on being safe. "The sea is his, and He made it, and his hand prepared the dry land." That told the story. The sea was the real intention of creation, but for sea-sick people and other incapables the good God Almighty made the shore as well.

But Dorothy's trembling was only a sort of "fearful joy." She would n't have missed it. She liked it all. She loved to see Captain Narraway take the oars, bend his broad back, set his feet against the ribs of the boat, and with three strong pulls clear the sort of whirlpool that swirled and eddied round the corner of the dock, and make for mid-stream. Once in the middle of the river, everything on shore seemed to grow remote and strange; the shad nets wound up on the frames drying, the clustering houses of the village, the two church spires,

the green fields, the banks up the river past the bridges swelling into hills, the trees with just a little play of green about their branches massing together like a great forest, a flight of crows in single file cawing; all these were being left behind. They were running down toward the wide, open sea as fast as tide and current and Captain Narraway's strong regular strokes of the oar could carry them. It was next to flying. At any rate, no other motion had ever given Dorothy just the same delightful feeling.

Jem stood up in the bow, scanning the horizon.

"I like this," he said in his quiet, positive way. "I should love to be a vikin'."

It would have sounded more like "a viking bold" if Jem had been able to pronounce the *ng*, but somehow he never could. Dorothy didn't know what a "vikin'" was, and wished little Emily had been along to say, "Please explain." But little Emily was too young and tender for such a long jaunt as they had before them.

Jem, however, went on to say that if he were only a "vikin'" he would build a boat in this wise: First, he would cut down the biggest tree in the forest; this he would hollow out,

carving for the prow a wonderful figure-head of a mermaid; then launch forth and discover strange countries.

"Why that is just what we are doing," said Dorothy.

"We are all vikings," observed Tish.

"Girls would never know how to be vikin's," Jem said with an air of having mastered the subject.

"Girls do most things nowadays," remarked Captain Narraway, "but I never happened to hear of one of them wanting to go on a whaling v'yage. Now in my young days" —

When Captain Narraway spoke of his young days one thing was certain, the children were going to have a story; in fact, one story after another. The captain had been on three different whaling voyages, not one lasting less than three years. I should like to put down two of the stories he told now, but then they need the captain's voice, the glint of the captain's blue eyes, the captain's laugh, and the accompaniment of the clean, regular stroke of the oars and the sound of the water as they glided on.

By this time High Elms seemed left far behind. The harbor was rounding into the open Sound and before them was a glittering mesh of

sunlight playing on the sparkling sea. At the right the white lighthouse showed peacefully on the green slopes, and on the left Stillford Point stretched down its silver tongue.

"Now, Jem," said Captain Narraway, "we'll change places if you don't mind. You shall take the oars and I'll do a bit of work."

Jem, in a business-like way, took off his jacket and stuffed it into the captain's cuddy-hole; then, guided by the captain's hand, they changed places,—Jem grasping the oars while the captain drew forth one of the long poles with a spear at the end which the children had seen him stow away in the bottom of the boat. Armed with this, the captain took his stand at the bow, thrust in the pole, then brought it up and looked at the water line. The water was about two and a half feet deep.

"Easy now," he said to Jem. "Easy, I say." He himself directed the course of the boat, using the pole like a paddle. He seemed to be looking down into the water as if expecting to find something. The girls also looked over the gunwale, and instead of the blue, rushing, opaque waters, they now saw the white sand on the bottom, with the sun shining down into it, everything gleaming with crystal clearness.

A curious feeling of hush, of expectation, had come over the children. Nobody ventured to speak. Dorothy knew that something was going to happen, but had no idea what it could be. She waited to see. Jem, obedient to the captain's gesture, rested his oars. Watching the sandy bottom, where tufts of seaweed and shells were scattered about, they could perceive that they were going through the water very rapidly. What were those queer flat things on the bottom that seemed to move — to glide! Something flashed, as if a swift sunbeam had cleaved the air! What was it? There was a splash, and up came the captain's spear with a broad fish flapping on the end of it. Down went the fish into a basket. Out went the spear, again, again, again!

All at once the boat jarred.

"Now, then," called the captain to Jem. They had grounded for a moment on the shallows. Then, with a few strokes of the oar, they were free and they moved on into deeper water, the captain standing at the bow all the time with his spear, looking ten feet tall as his figure loomed up against the sky.

They knew now what it meant when they saw the spear flashing forth again. Once, twice,

thrice. The basket was half full of fish already. Looking down through the transparent water, the girls could see not only flat-fish, but here and there an eel pursuing its sinuous way. The captain would have liked nothing better than to bring up half a dozen of the eels, but knew that Dorothy and Tish would not have enjoyed having the wriggling, squirming creatures near them.

"I guess that'll do," Captain Narraway now remarked. "I thought mebbe a fish or two would taste good by the time we had got to Half Moon Beach."

There were enough fish in the basket, and the captain always told the children that enough was enough; that it was the trying to get too much that did all the harm in the world. But, as he had said to himself, he had never in all his born days seen the fish so thick on the flats; so he caught two more. Then just as, with a sigh over leaving as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, he was about to put away his spear, he had a glimpse of something huge, a real monster of a fish! "I'll have him," said the captain. Out went the spear, but the captain didn't have the fish that time. The fish had moved suddenly and unexpectedly to-

wards the stern. Round went the boat. The captain gave orders in a very low voice, but with such an air of excitement that the children gazed at him with awe. His blue eyes sparkled. "Steady, Jem, steady," came the warning voice. They were moving across a bar which the tide had left almost bare, but they managed to skim it, just grazing the sand once.

There was the big fish, half hidden under a tuft of sedge. Down went the spear, but away went the fish into deeper water. However, the captain knew that all the sea-creatures were after the sunlight; the warmer weather had brought them up out of their mud-holes, but the deeper water was still too cold for their taste. So, without a whisper, without a breath, without a sound, on they glided to the next shoal. The children, warned by the captain's uplifted finger, were afraid to stir even an eyelid, to dare even try to look.

"There's the critter, large as life," muttered the captain under his breath. There came a gleam of the spear! a splash, — a splash indeed! The whole thing seemed too strange, too dreadful, too incredible! They rubbed their eyes, they wondered if they were awake or dreaming! They dared not speak at first, then all burst

forth into a loud cry. For there was Captain Narraway in the water! He had jumped along with his spear! The "critter," as the captain called the fish, had thought he understood the little game and had begun to glide off as soon as he saw the shadow of the spear. But the captain, making a flying leap, got him after all, landing, if one may be said to land where there are two feet and a half of water, on the ridge of a sand-bar, where he stood now looking like Father Neptune brandishing his trident aloft. But he had got the fish on the spear and was triumphant. To have lost it under these circumstances would have been disgrace. Meantime, however, when he had jumped to the right, the boat, as if it had been a pendulum, had shot just as far in the opposite direction and was still moving under the momentum of that push.

"Easy now, easy now," called the captain reassuringly to Jem, who was a little at a loss. "Right oar, right oar, right oar, one, two, three! Now pull both together, pull both together, my hearty. Easy now, easy, easy."

Easy it was. The boat was now within the captain's reach. His first anxiety was to get his fish safely inside the basket and to fasten

down the cover with the wooden pin. So much accomplished, the captain pulled the boat square alongside; holding it steady, he ordered Jem back to the bow; then in another minute, nobody could tell how, using his spear as a lever, the captain leaped, alighting exactly in the middle of the boat, sat down, took up the oars, and off they went.

"But, cap'n," remonstrated the motherly Tish, "I'm afraid you'll take cold sitting down with wet feet."

"I take cold a-setting down with wet feet!" said Captain Narraway with a chuckle. "Don't you know that you can't take cold in salt water? It warms you instead of chills you."

The captain, at any rate, seemed to suffer from no chill. He had set himself at his oars as if they were entered for a racing-cup. Indeed it was high time they were off the flats, for near them one bar was beginning to show above the water. On they glided towards the life, the stir, the swirl of the strong current. In the shallows the sun had beaten down almost with summer heat; here they found the breeze again and the free feeling of the open sea. The blue Sound was now before them, dotted with white sails, and at least three steamers were in

sight with their pennants of smoke floating behind them. Captain Narraway, resting his oars for a minute to cool the palms of his hands, laughed with glee and began to tell about "that fish," of what a knowing old fellow it was, of how it had thought it could manage to fool him and get away, but how it was all of no use. It was just one more of the big fish of the sea that, after a fair fight, had given in to the captain. Fish he had caught in his boyhood lived again as he told the children all the fish stories he could remember. There had been an eel — oh, what an eel — five feet long and as big round as a log, that he had hunted on the flats for a week, saying day after day that he would fight it out on that line if it took all summer. Then the salmon he had caught, and the cod on the Banks! That was fishing indeed, living all summer on water over forty fathoms deep, and pulling up cod and halibut you had to fight with almost for your life.

The captain could keep silence with any man alive, but he was one of the deep, simple men who like to feel they have achieved something useful in the world and to live it over again; and when, as now, he had done something with his good right hand, it was as if his spirit caught

fire and that unloosed his tongue. He went on telling fish stories which held the children breathless so that they did not know that their course had changed; hardly perceived that they had rounded Lighthouse Point; that High Elms and its harbor had vanished from sight and that they were keeping their way along not far from a low, sandy shore strewn with shells where little waves broke in a line of foam. Just ahead, a sort of promontory seemed to run into the sea. This was called Point-no-point, and the meaning of the name became apparent as they approached it and saw that it was no point, but the beginning of a fresh stretch of wonderful white beach, curve after curve of which rounded away towards the far horizon.

This was Half Moon Beach, and when he had gained certain bearings, the captain headed his boat straight toward the shore, and with strokes which made it bound like a living thing far up the beach. Before it grounded, out sprang the captain, seized the bow in his hands and ran it far up the sloping sands, above high-water mark. Here the children could jump out without wetting their feet.

Really this was a wonderful sort of a place. Just the sky and the water and the sand! Look

ing up and down the long, curving lines of the shore, a faint mistiness hung over the white line of spray which took the light, giving here and there the tints of the prism.

"What is that sound?" said Dorothy. It was a sort of sigh which came and went and came again.

"That's the voice of the sea," answered Tish. "I love to hear it. It grows louder when the tide is coming in fast."

It was like a voice, or like a good many voices calling together. Dorothy sat down on the sand, clasped her hands around her knees, and listened. It was like somebody speaking. She could, it seemed to her, have understood the words if only the sounds had not run together and grown confused. It made her feel half sleepy. The light was so dazzlingly bright, she closed her eyes a minute. Curious to relate, with her eyes shut the voices seemed to grow louder and more distinct. She heard Marcia Dundas', and Gay's and Lucy's; it seemed to her also that Carlo and Flossy were barking, and then — why, that was Jinny's voice — Jinny, the girl she saw in New York. It was all a babble without meaning. Opening her eyes again, she looked across the gently heaving waters of the Sound, blue and

rippling in places, again taking the sunlight in patches of gold or reflecting the sky in long silver bands that stretched away into the far vistas east and west. Opposite, the blue shores of Long Island itself were far withdrawn in azure haze. Up and down went the ships, and in one place was a black smudge of smoke across the horizon which showed that a steamboat was there, although one could n't make out the hull.

Dorothy had sat down on the sand not very far from a line of white pebbles which at first were dry. Then the water running in and out began to throw up a little spray and wet them, making pretty rainbow effects. There was something in the regular approach and retreat of the little waves, with the swish, swish, swish, as they rushed up and down, that was very soothing. She kept thinking that the next minute she would go and see what the others were doing, then put it off. All at once she started and rubbed her eyes. Where had those pebbles gone? They were quite hidden; the water had crept up far past them.

"It's the tide," Dorothy said to herself with awe. It was so curious that where there had been pebbles and sand, now there should be little foamy waves dancing up and down.

"Now I can see how it is made," she murmured with a little sigh of satisfaction.

Peggy came running down the beach.

"Why, Dorothy," she cried, "the water will wet your feet."

Up sprang Dorothy.

"Will it come up all over the sand?" she asked.

Peggy pointed out the line of shells and driftwood and wreckage of all sorts, and said that was "high-water mark."

The captain, she explained, had dragged the boat up to a place where the water could just float it when the tide was full.

While Dorothy had been listening to what the waves were saying, the others had been hard at work taking everything out of the boat; the lunch-baskets, the basket of fish, the oars, the spear, the boat-hook, and even the seats. Then the captain had flung out the big stones he had put in for ballast, and now, instead, they were ballasting the boat with the firm white sand of which the beach was composed. Captain Narra-way's habit was to come down every spring two or three times after this sand, which was useful in a great many ways. Grocers and butchers used it to sprinkle their floors; it was excellent

for scouring ; it was the best thing to put in the bottom of bird-cages, and many mothers liked to have a load of it dumped near the house for their little ones to dig in and roll in if they liked. Miss Bevis herself had engaged this whole load they were getting to-day, and the captain thought that it was probable she wanted it for her "antique room." In old-fashioned times sloops had come for miles and miles up and down the coast after this sand, and the curves of the shore showed how it had been dug out year after year. For this sand was noted for its purity.

"See how white it is," said Captain Narraway. "Almost pure quartz and flint." He took out his knife and opened it. "Hardly a bit of iron or manganese in it," he went on. His knife was a magnet and a few particles caught and adhered to the blade. "Often enough," he observed, "beach sand is so loaded down with iron it'll hang on the steel like a fringe."

He went on to tell about how different sand was on the different seacoasts in the world. In Bermuda, for example, the sand was a soft rose-color, being made up of bits of coral and shells ; and in the West Indies also the sand was of

shells, and quite different from the gray sand of the New Jersey coast. Then in the East Indies all the tints of mother-of-pearl played on the sands; and in the Bay of Naples the sand was almost black from the lava and ashes of Mt. Vesuvius. Every kind of sand had its good points, but for sand to walk on, to scour with, why this flinty sand of Half Moon Beach couldn't be beaten by anything on the globe. What a thing it was to know all this! And also what pride and distinction one felt in dishing up the finest sand on the whole wide earth. Only Dorothy did wonder, *how* with a boat as full of sand as it could hold, they were ever going to get back to High Elms. However, she was willing to trust to Captain Narraway. *He* always *knew*, and besides knowing, was cool, courageous, had a quiet eye, a quick brain, and, above all, the strength of a giant.

"Now," said the captain when the boat was full, "we'll see about getting dinner."

For it was twelve o'clock, and twelve o'clock was the captain's dinner-time.

"Do you suppose," he asked the children, "you could pick me up some driftwood?"

They flew to obey him, and in five minutes had a big pile of boards and splinters and

sticks, and by the time it was collected the captain had laid stones and shells against a sand-bank in order to start the fire, and was dressing the fish. Fish for dinner! There was something simple, primitive, almost barbaric, about this sort of thing, — spearing your own fish like the hunters and savages Jem had always longed to live with.

The tragical side of life for Dorothy was that death came in so often. Still the more tragical thing is that one gets used to it, so that she felt her appetite getting ready for that dinner, and had to comfort herself by reflecting that it did seem to be what fish were made for.

“Of course,” said the captain, “salmon is the best fish in the world; and shad is so good we like to eat it in spite of the bones. There’s plenty of good fish in the sea, but I’m inclined to think that these here little flat-fish are as delicate and dainty eating as most, — when you’re hungry.”

And particularly when Captain Narraway was the cook. He had made a broiling-fork out of a splinter, and by the time the wood had burned down to a bed of coals, the fish were ready and the children were ready. The luncheon in the baskets fitted in very well, with its

bread and butter, sandwiches, and so on. But oh, if the captain had n't had the good luck to spear those fish how hungry they might have been! For what they had brought from home seemed like the mere apple-sauce to the captain's substantial roast pig. The oranges came in very well for dessert.

The tide had come up to the boat while they were eating, and by the time they had finished had almost floated it. The captain looked after the anchor; carried it farther up and planted it afresh deep in a sand-dune, then told the children they could run about for half an hour while he smoked a pipe. Climbing up to the top of the highest sand dunes, they could see the water on all sides, taking light in gold and silver patches, or ruffling under the blue of the skies. Tongues of flame seemed to be playing about towers and high windows of the houses in Rosemaryport where the afternoon sun shone on them.

Then coming down, the children ran races along the beach; they stopped and wondered over strange things that had floated up in some high tide and been stranded far up among the sedges; horseshoe crabs, star-fish, and the like. There were shells which had been washed and worn into strange shapes; some of the little

mussel-shells had all the delicate beauty of mother-of-pearl. Dorothy could not for one moment lose the sense of that voice in the sea speaking to her. They all waited with her to watch a wave run up, then retreat, leaving its fringe of foam at their feet. She bent her ear to listen.

"If I could only know just what it says," she exclaimed.

"I don't quite like to listen to it," observed Jem. "It makes me feel lonesome."

"I think it's soft and pleasant," said the cheerful Peggy. "It is like the frogs in the pond."

"Oh no," insisted Dorothy. "It is n't like the song the frogs sing. They seem to be happy and keep calling, 'Spring has come, Spring has come!' This is something that is n't quite happy. I think Jem is right, that it does make one feel a little lonesome." She paused a moment and listened to the sound of the water that lapped unceasingly along the sand. "Yes, that is it," she went on, "I keep thinking when I hear it, of grandma and aunt Hester and Marcia and Gay and Lucy. Then, too, it brings Jinny back,—I hear her laugh and see her face."

"That girl you saw in New York who ran off with your"—

"Yes, yes," said Dorothy. "You know we made up our minds she did n't mean to run off. I often think of her."

Jem, perhaps to work off his "lonesomeness," had taken to turning somersaults among the sand-dunes, and to walking on his hands uttering strange noises, perhaps to suggest the voice of the monsters of the deep sea. There was something startling, rather uncanny in those antics, but Tish explained:—

"He's only letting himself off, don't you see? He does get so tired of setting an example sometimes, and being on his good behavior. It is such a responsibility to be the son of the clergyman."

Presently, however, Jem walked by mistake into the water. Out he came, glad once more to get his head uppermost and walk on his feet.

"Time to go home," shouted Captain Narra-way.

The tide had floated the boat. The baskets were packed; the seats were laid across the sand; the oars were in the thole-pins; the anchor was weighed. Everything was ready except the

packing of the children, which was soon accomplished, Tish and Jem being put together in the stern and Dorothy and Peggy in the bow.

Then the captain sat down and took the oars, and without more than the occasional movement of an oar they were off. Just for one moment they rolled in the ground swell; then the oars fell to work and they had gained the open water and felt the movement of the upward current. The white gulls were dipping and screaming around the Lighthouse point. The sun was going down in a yellow haze. The sea was without a ripple. The sound stretched out like a great glass. They were not in a hurry. They were carried along with the rising flood, the captain helping only by an occasional light stroke of the oars.

“Always make sure,” he said, “when you’re going anywhere, that the flowing tide is with you.”

CHAPTER VI

TWO VERITABLE ANTIQUES

It was the week after the trip to Half Moon Beach that Miss Bevis sent Truett over to ask Mrs. Clare to let Dorothy take a drive with her at two o'clock. Now when Mr. Bevis said two o'clock, it might happen to be a quarter past, half past, or a quarter to three; in fact, if he became interested in watching his bees or making his beans twine the right way round the pole, he might forget to come at all. But when Miss Rachel said two o'clock, it meant on the stroke of the town-clock, and Dorothy, who was standing in the doorway giving her mother her last kiss, ran down to the gate and was ready to jump into the carriage as soon as it stopped.

"We are going up the river road," said Miss Bevis. "I thought it would be a pretty drive now that the apple-blossoms are out." Here she dropped her voice, looked very mysterious, and murmured into Dorothy's ear, "Besides, I have an errand."

Dorothy at once guessed that her cousin Rachel was after "antiques," perhaps for the "antique room." So she nodded and smiled with full sympathy, while she said aloud that she particularly loved to go up the river road. In that part of High Elms where the Clares and Bevises lived, the houses were large and surrounded by lawns with shrubberies and beds of geraniums and big tubs of blue and pink hydrangeas. But driving up the long leisurely street past the post-office, the stores, and the railroad, the place grew more rural: there were houses set in the midst of orchards; there were great clumps of purple and white lilacs also, and as everything was now in bloom, it was as pretty as anything needed to be. Dorothy looked and looked and then, drawing a deeper breath, she exclaimed:—

"It is so hard to tell just what is nicest. But it does seem to me spring is best of all, don't you think so, cousin Rachel?"

"In spring we see the miracle take place before our eyes," said Miss Rachel. "One week there is a dry stick and the next week it breaks out in buds and leaves and blossoms. The seed comes to life; birds and chickens come out of the eggs. Yes, spring is a wonderful time.

Now on some of the planets there can be no change of season at all. We shouldn't like that, should we? And on others it must not only be always summer, but always bright day. Just think of it!"

"Do the people have to sit up always there? Never to go to bed?" Dorothy inquired.

Then talking over those queer sister-worlds up in the sky, they decided that this earth was the very nicest possible place to live in, and that on all the earth High Elms seemed one of the most favored spots, and of all the year spring being the most beautiful time, this particular afternoon was the perfection of the spring. Such talk naturally put Dorothy into a contented state of mind.

By this time they were out of the village, and the road, rising always a little higher and a little higher, began to lean towards the river, which, lying broad and peaceful with its wooded shores on the Stillford side, showed blue in the openings between the pink and white apple-blossoms. Everywhere were birds; blackbirds, robins, bluebirds, white-throated sparrows, — darting, wheeling, skimming, flying along with them and over them. The air was full of their twitter and trill. The more you listened, the

more you heard it from all sides, — twitter and trill, twitter and trill ; depths and depths of it from the trees and the bushes and the hedge-rows and the farther woods. Some of the birds sang in little carols, beginning a strain and giving it over and over as if practicing. A whole flock of saucy blackbirds seemed actually to have joined company with Miss Bevis and Dorothy, flying from rail to rail of the fence ; waiting for them to come up, then taking wing again. In some of the fields on either hand, sheep with lambs frisking beside them were to be seen. Finally they caught a glimpse of half a dozen calves in a meadow, which at once put Miss Bevis in mind of Juno ; and to be put in mind of Juno was to have the charm of the apple-blossoms and the song of the birds give way to the pressing cares of actual every-day life.

“Do you suppose Nancy will remember to feed Juno?” she asked suddenly, bending forward and addressing Truett.

“If she don’t,” Truett replied, “you don’t need to be afraid, ma’am, that that there calf won’t look out for herself. She’s eat three dish-towels and part of the leg off my blue overalls this morning. I left a lot of empty tomato cans on purpose to have her dispose of them.”

"But, Truett, tomato cans would n't be good for her!"

"She's eat everything she could get hold of on the place," Truett replied, "and I've yet to see the thing that hurts her."

Miss Bevis looked so much disturbed that Dorothy tried to reassure her.

"Cousin Rachel," she whispered, "don't mind Truett. He's only joking. Truett does joke sometimes."

"He ought not to joke on such a subject," said Miss Rachel seriously.

"Who was it you wanted to find, Miss Bevis," Truett now inquired. "We're getting into Putney village."

It was "Mrs. Lorenzo Sloper" that he was to inquire for. Miss Rachel forgot the calf and tomato cans in the excitement of her real errand.

"You see, Dorothy dear," she now explained to her little companion, "in this part of the town there are a good many families who are descendants of the early settlers."

Dorothy looked at the farmhouses on either hand, trying to be as much interested in them as in the sunshine and apple-blossoms and birds and glimpses of the river.

"And almost every one of the early settlers

who came over," Miss Rachel pursued, "possessed at least one substantial piece of furniture, and to preserve what their fathers bequeathed them is a part of some people's religion. I have heard"—her voice sank to a whisper—"of two fine Elizabethan pieces of carved black oak, one a cabinet and the other a buffet, and I am going to try to see if I can buy them."

"For the antique room?" inquired Dorothy with eagerness.

"No, for the dining-room," Miss Rachel replied; "but"—

"This must be the house, ma'am," Truett now remarked, pulling in the horse. "This is Lorenzo Sloper's."

It was a small two-story house, with a flat roof, and a piazza in front, and such a general air of being painfully modern and commonplace, it seemed impossible that an Elizabethan article of furniture could be found in it. The only promising feature of the situation was that the barn was a strong, substantial structure, and had not been built yesterday. Two small freckled children, a boy and a girl, were looking through the wickets of the side gate, and when Miss Bevis leaned out of the carriage and asked whether Mrs. Lorenzo Sloper lived there, for

reply the boy, the oldest of the pair, shouted at the top of his voice, —

“Mother, mother, come out here. There’s a woman here wants ter saw yer!”

“Oh, what English!” said Miss Bevis with a shudder. “Can it be possible that the descendants of the early settlers can have deteriorated to this degree?”

“Mother, mother!” the boy shouted again, but Miss Bevis put her hands to her ears.

Before his voice died away, a woman thrust her head out from the corner of the house.

“Hain’t got a single egg to sell. My hens is every one of them a-settin’,” she called, evidently anxious to dismiss any possible visitors, and vanishing as soon as she had spoken.

“I’m not after eggs,” said Miss Bevis. “I just wanted to” —

“An’ all the cows have calved or else run dry,” the woman called, ducking her head out again. “I hain’t made half a pound of butter for two months.”

“I’m not after butter,” said Miss Bevis, in no wise repelled by the unmistakable signs that the woman was not in a hospitable mood. “I simply wish to ask if Mrs. Lorenzo Sloper lives here.”

"I'm her," said the woman, her head once more appearing. Miss Bevis, observing that she wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Mrs. Sloper, now got out of the carriage and told Truett to drive on and come back in quarter of an hour. Mrs. Sloper meanwhile had wholly disappeared; but by the time Miss Bevis and Dorothy were coming up the walk she issued from the house, having made a hasty toilet, — that is, pulled down her sleeves and put on a clean check apron. She was rather a nice looking woman, Dorothy thought, with a very high white forehead and auburn hair combed smoothly down over her ears.

"I s'pose," she now said in a tone of having to accept the situation, "it's my flowers. I don't myself think so much of my daffys and jonquils as I do of my pinies. My pinies are a little bit late about coming out, but when they do bust out, they bust out amazing."

"Your daffodils and jonquils are very nice indeed," said Miss Bevis. "I should like to see your peonies when they are in full blossom; but to-day, Mrs. Sloper, I have come on a different errand. I am very much interested in old-fashioned furniture, and I hear that you have a carved black oak cabinet which was brought

over by Mr. Sloper's ancestors in the early days of the New Haven colony."

Mrs. Sloper gazed at Miss Bevis in blank astonishment.

"We? Us?" she ejaculated. "*We* got a carved black oak cabinet that was brought over? Hain't never heard of such a thing."

"My good woman," Miss Bevis insisted, "you must have it. I have been told so three times by different people at High Elms."

Mrs. Sloper remained lost in thought for a minute, then said, —

"I'm free to confess *I* don't know nothing about such a thing. I'm most ready to declare that you may go through the house from garret to cellar, and if you find a carved cabinet you may have it to carry home."

The two children leaning against the gate had huddled into the corner of the fence to admit the visitors, and then following along the path were gazing at Dorothy with all their eyes. Dorothy, rather fascinated, looked back. They were somehow such outlandish looking children, neat as pins, but oh, so very queer and dressed so remarkably! She was trying to think of something to say to them, when the boy, who, in spite of keeping his glance fixed on Dorothy,

gave his ears to the talk going on between his mother and the visitor, burst out with, —

“Why, mother, it’s that old cupboard out in the barn she’s asking about!”

“That old, broken-down thing, all dropping to pieces?” said Mrs. Sloper incredulously.

“I’ve heerd father say as how his people used to set store by it,” said the boy. “He told me he’d lick me like guns if I whittled it.”

“Ain’t that boy smart as a steel trap?” said Mrs. Sloper admiringly, and turning to Miss Bevis who, after being cast down, was brightening up visibly. “I should n’t never have thought of that old rattletrap in all my born days.”

Miss Bevis was actually excited.

“Evidently that is what I have heard about,” she said. “May I not go out to the barn and look at it?”

It was clear to Dorothy that this suggestion roused dire dismay in the boy and girl, but Mrs. Sloper did not seem to notice it, and saying, “Why, sartin,” led the way, stopping to advise the visitor to lift her skirts pretty well, as they had to cross the farmyard.

The barn lay at no great distance from the house; but there were difficulties in the way.

A melancholy looking turkey-cock bristled up as they approached and began to gobble fiercely, and seemed about to attack them, until Mrs. Sloper took off her apron and shook it in his face. Then a rough-looking colt had to be driven out of the path. Finally, however, they reached the threshold of the great barn, empty and bare to its rafters, yet still haunted by the smell of last year's hay and clover that had filled the lofts all winter. Coming out of the bright sunshine, the place at first seemed dark as night to Miss Bevis and Dorothy, who stood gazing round, rather at a loss.

"There 'tis, big as life," said Mrs. Sloper with good-humored contempt, pointing towards a corner.

Miss Bevis peered into the gloom, advanced a few steps, put her hand on something with a well-turned corner, and went plump down on her knees before it. She was so deeply interested she did not at first observe that the boy was pulling at her gown, until he said in a trembling voice, —

"I say, ma'am, ma'am, my hen's setting there and she's drefful fierce."

Miss Bevis, whose eyes by this time had become accustomed to the darkness, cared nothing

at that moment for hens, no matter how fierce they might be. She had felt the massive oak frame, and she was content. At this moment Mrs. Sloper threw open the wide swing door at the other end of the barn, and in came the light from the west, flooding with sunshine the floor, the great empty haymows, the dusty rafters, and, above all, the Elizabethan cabinet in the corner. Dorothy had crept up to Miss Bevis, who had whipped out a small bottle of turpentine and a bit of flannel, and was now rubbing the wood.

“Do you see the grain?” she asked. “Real oak, black with age.”

“It does look pretty black,” said Dorothy.

“And that carving. Do you see those leaves?”

“Why, cousin Rachel, there are letters,” cried Dorothy, beginning to be excited herself.

There really were letters in good old English text. They could make out a t, an M, a g.

“It is some proverb, — some wise saw,” said Miss Bevis. “Probably it is” —

“I tell you, ma’am,” said the boy, trying to draw her away from the place, “you had better not rile my hen.”

The hen, who had a nest in a lower part of the piece of furniture, was indeed bristling up

her feathers as if she had been a porcupine, all the time emitting sounds which showed her displeasure at having her quiet retreat thus invaded.

"Dorothy," said Miss Bevis in triumph, "I wonder what brother Bevis will say now." She rose to her feet. "My good woman," she said, with an air of intense pride and satisfaction, "I must have this cabinet; I really must."

"I don't believe," Mrs. Sloper replied with a little laugh, "that Mr. Sloper'd ever think of giving it away. 'Tain't no particular use, but as long as it's there, why it's there, and Mr. Sloper ain't one as goes in for change."

"Of course I wish to pay for it," said Miss Bevis in her grandest manner. "I want to pay handsomely for it."

"Pay for that old thing!" Mrs. Sloper demanded skeptically. "How much do you think it is worth?"

"Would you take ten dollars?" asked Miss Bevis, a little nervous at making the first bid.

"Ten dollars! ten dollars! ten dollars!" The woman uttered the words over and over, as if unable to take them in.

"Well, fifteen then," proceeded Miss Bevis.

"Why, ma'am," said Mrs. Sloper, "you

must be crazy. I thought ten dollars was three times what the rickety old thing was worth ; but if you are willing to pay ten dollars, why take it and welcome."

The boy and girl, who had been following this conversation with the keenest interest, set up a simultaneous shout of wrath and despair.

"She shan't have it," shrieked the boy, striking out with legs and arms.

"Why, Lemuel," began Mrs. Sloper soothingly, "when the lady"—

"I don't care about no ten dollars, mother," said Lemuel, only restrained by his mother's arm from attacking Miss Bevis. "I won't have my speckled hen broken up. She's got fifteen yellow Brahma eggs under her, an' I"—

"I can change her into a box without her minding it one bit," said Mrs. Sloper. "Don't you fear, Lemuel."

"I tell you," cried Lemuel, "she would n't be satisfied to go on settin' anywheres else."

"Why, no; of course she would n't," said Dorothy with decision. Dorothy herself knew something of hens and their ways. Indeed, with the most limited knowledge of hens, who could suppose that a speckled hen who had set her heart on raising a brood of chickens in a

compartment of a carved Elizabethan cabinet would be content to come down to a mere box.

“But how much longer will she be sitting?” Miss Bevis now inquired, looking at the hen with some sympathy.

“She won’t be coming off till next Tuesday or Wednesday,” replied Lemuel tearfully.

Even though Miss Bevis was already as much attached to the Elizabethan cabinet as was the hen herself, she could wait a week. The hen’s feelings and the hen’s rights were to be respected. Then, after she and her fifteen yellow Brahma offspring were put in a coop in the meadow, why then, if Mr. Sloper could spare a pair of horses from the spring work, he would pack the antique cabinet in the ox-cart and deliver it at the Bevis house.

“But what I wonder,” said Mrs. Sloper, “is what on airth you are going to do with the crazy old thing.”

Truett had been waiting for some time. Miss Bevis and Dorothy got into the carriage and drove away, leaving Mrs. Sloper and the children rather bewildered. Although there had been no eggs to sell, and no butter, and although the peonies were only in bud, it had been a most profitable afternoon. Even the children,

at first so hostile, so alarmed, couldn't help being pleased at their own good fortune, for Miss Bevis had not been niggardly, and each had a bright, shining half-dollar.

Miss Bevis, meanwhile, was in high spirits over her wonderful "find." One was not enough, she wanted another "veritable antique."

"Now, Truett," she said, "drive to Old Farms."

Leaving the river road behind, with its occasional glimpses of the far blue line of the Sound, they took the cross-road. This was a mere lane; but with so many birds and so many different flowers blooming by the banks, that it gave its own distinct feeling of pleasure. As Dorothy had said, it is sometimes so hard to decide what one loves best. The beautiful, stately river had a grand, free life of its own. Nevertheless, it looked so "homey" and comfortable to see the scarlet columbines nodding to her, as much as to say, "How are you?" Many of the flowers reminded her of Swallow-field, particularly the bird's-foot violets, which made one place on the side of the road as blue as the sky. Then in the woods the dogwood was coming out beautifully, and twice she really had to ask Miss Bevis to let Truett stop, for in

a corner of the fence was a bush of wild pink azalea in full bud. Dorothy did not pick them. She loved better to leave them there to fulfill the order of their lives. She loved flowers as only those love them who can

“Love the wood-rose and leave it on its stalk.”

Miss Bevis made Dorothy repeat some lines over and over until she knew them by heart :

“Beneath my feet

The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I knew
The rolling river, the morning bird.
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.”

But they had made a short cut and reached Old Farms almost before they knew it. It was Captain Witham that she wished to find here, and Truett had to stop and ask a man busy with a harrow where Captain Witham lived. It turned out to be a great place for Withams, and oddly enough most of them seemed to be captains; two of them had been volunteers in the Civil War; one was a sea-faring man; at least, he had

sometimes run a sloop over to Port Jefferson after bricks. For some reason they decided to try the sea-faring man first, Captain Moses Witham; but then they found that Captain Moses Witham did n't, properly speaking, live in Old Farms, but on the Huntington road. It was a white house,—that is, it had originally been painted white, and had an addition that had n't been painted at all. It had a high well-curb in the yard, but the real distinctive feature of the Captain Moses Witham place was that there were two tall pine-trees just back of the house.

“I do somehow feel as if Captain Moses Witham was the man,” said Miss Bevis with clear conviction. “Truett, drive over there; We shall know it by the pine-trees.”

There were three houses, however, shaded by pine-trees, so it was really the unpainted addition and the high well-curb which pointed out the particular place. When they stopped before the gate they saw a pleasant looking woman in a green sunbonnet, sweeping the yard with a brush-broom. She came towards them on the instant, with a beaming smile.

“Is this Captain Moses Witham's?” Miss Bevis inquired.

"This is Captain Moses Witham's," said the woman, advancing with outstretched hand. "I'm Mrs. Witham. Do get right out and walk in, both you and the little girl. I'm so glad to see you. I'm not too busy, not one bit. I always do like to come out and sweep the dooryard on a pleasant spring afternoon, particularly when the apple-blossoms are out. To-day it came over me all at once that my sewing would keep, but that it was n't always blossom time and May. Then, too, it seemed more sociable. I thought somebody might come along, and here 't is. Is this your little girl? Ain't she a picture? I've got two daughters of my own, but they're both married, and one lives up to Huntington and the other in Rosemaryport. They've got nine boys between them and not one girl. I do love a little girl. What's your name, my dear? Dorothy? Well now, ain't that just a name as is a name! I do think, ma'am, you showed the best sort of taste in taking a fine old-fashioned name and" —

Miss Bevis tried to explain that Dorothy was not her own child, but it was of no use. Mrs. Witham's flow of conversation had evidently been dammed up for some time, and now, like the powerful stream it was, it burst bounds, it

overflowed and seemed to carry both visitors along on its current. Before Miss Bevis could explain who she was and why she was there, she was ushered into the house, whose door stood hospitably wide open, into the parlor where Mrs. Witham, after rolling up the shades and lighting a pile of sticks on the hearth, "just to take off the sort of creepy chill," began to bring out cake and cordial.

"I ain't often lonely," she was saying, "and then my daughters each of them comes over once a week, and once a month they make a point of coming together and their husbands come to tea and to take them home. And when it comes a holiday we have all the children along and I have a big dinner to get up, and after such times I sometimes feel rather pleased to think I'm going to be alone. For my daughters is both pretty good talkers, though their husbands is silent men; different from Captain Witham, who can keep quiet with anybody, but when he wants to say something has it to say. I don't often feel that I miss much in the way of society, but somehow when the days in spring keep getting longer and everything out of doors sweeter and sweeter, and your house-cleaning's all done and your sewing's pretty well along,

why, you do like somebody to say a word to, and I'm right down glad to see you."

Miss Bevis was by this time, quite against her wish or intention, drinking raspberry cordial and eating cake.

"Perhaps now, Dorothy would like to have a nice little molasses cake," said Mrs. Witham. She vanished, but Miss Bevis and Dorothy could still hear her voice going on in the kitchen and pantry, at first growing less and less, but then, as she returned, increasing in strength until here she was again with six delicious looking little round cakes on a plate. Of course it was not what they came for, but still Dorothy liked little ginger and molasses cakes and was not displeased. I fancy that even Miss Bevis was glad to be strengthened by the raspberry cordial.

"I wish to inquire," Miss Bevis now said, speaking in a very loud distinct voice, "whether Captain Moses Witham" —

"I am so dreadfully sorry he ain't at home," said Mrs. Witham. "He has been carting stone on to the foundation of the new house for a week now. One of them rich New Yorkers is going to put up a grand house, nothing short of a palace 'tis said, and as we abound in

stones the captain thought he might as well make something out of them. As they say up in Sharon,

‘The Lord having rocks and stones to spare
Dropped them on Sharon here and there,’

and this part of Old Farms is” —

“I have heard,” said Miss Bevis, “that Captain Witham inherited” —

“Yes, the old Brooks place. This is the old Brooks place. His mother was a Brooks, — his father came from” —

“Is there a sideboard in the house? — an old-fashioned sideboard?” demanded Miss Bevis.

“Why laws, yes,” replied Mrs. Witham, her face all over smiles. “Should you like to see it?” Mrs. Witham had perhaps not been without her own share of curiosity as to the errand of her visitors. “I was showing it to some boarders I had last summer, and they thought it was real interesting. It’s down in the cellar, but it’s a good dry cellar, and there’s nothing there to make it musty.”

It did seem surprising to Dorothy that taken up as they had been and carried along by the flood of Mrs. Witham’s talk, Cousin Rachel had somehow contrived to get hold of the helm and steer to the desired haven. For here they

were descending the cellar stairs with the coveted object in full view. Just at the bottom of the stairway was a quaint, solid-looking, old piece of furniture, at the sight of which Miss Bevis uttered a cry of joy.

"I am anxious to buy that," she said, rushing at the sideboard and at the subject without further preamble. "I live in an old house which I am trying to furnish with old furniture, and it is my strong desire to purchase this."

"Now that's what I always said," replied Mrs. Witham, "that it had been a beautiful old thing in its day. Of course, I could n't think of selling it. Money is no particular object to us. Not that we have got much, — but then we don't need much, and my daughters have both married men" —

Mrs. Witham was brought back to the subject by Miss Bevis.

"But you do not appreciate the value of it, you make no use of it."

"Why, ma'am," said Mrs. Witham, radiant with enthusiasm, "I set everything by it. Nobody could take more comfort in a thing than I do in having it. I keep my pies in it."

"Pies!" exclaimed Miss Bevis. Then again, "Pies!"

"You see," explained Mrs. Witham, "my husband likes pies almost better than anything in the world, and then with my daughters coming once a week, and their two husbands and their nine boys occasionally (boys are the peskiest, hungriest critters in the world, not like dear little girls)." Mrs. Witham said this with a glance at Dorothy and a nod of the head.

"You see," she went on, starting afresh without finishing the sentence. "I generally make from twenty to thirty pies every Saturday, and I should n't know what in the world to do with them if I did n't have this old cupboard with its deep shelves to set them in. It's old, but the wood is like iron and not a rat or mouse can nibble a hole in it, and it's warm in winter and cool and dry in summer. Just look now," she said, opening the doors,

"Carved with figures strange and sweet."

"There, ten pie-plant pies, five dried apple, and six mince. The rest have been eaten; some were custard and lemon, which we generally have on Sunday. It's a little late for mince, but often enough in May comes a long northeast storm, and then Captain Witham likes a mince-pie heated up hot in the oven. I used

my raspberry jam and currant preserves as long as they lasted, and lots of dried cherries. My husband he believes there 's nothing too good to go into a pie. He was saying this morning at breakfast that he was beginning to think of gooseberry pie and blackberry and huckleberry. Then that by that time apples would be here again. 'The years go round in a dream,' he said. Wan't it beautiful, ma'am? 'The years go round in a dream, and if it wan't for pies to mark the seasons I should n't know where I was!' There's a little bit of poetry in my husband, you see. He always says squash and pumpkin pies sort of light up the fall. Of course, too, there's chicken pies and pigeon pies and beefsteak pies, they come in all through the year. I don't count them just as pies, they're somehow regular food, too. Real pie's a little different. You can most always eat a piece of pie. I always feel as if Captain Witham must be sick if he don't say when bedtime comes, 'Mother, it seems to me as if a piece of pie would taste real good.' Often as not we finish a whole pie between us."

Miss Bevis had tried from time to time to put in a word, but without avail. Now, while Mrs. Witham began to search the shelves for a pie

of a particularly perfect "bake," she did contrive to say, —

"You must both have excellent digestions. I would n't for the world deprive Captain Witham of his piece of pie, but" —

By this time Mrs. Witham had found a pie of exactly the right size.

"Now, ma'am," she said, "I should be so pleased if you and Dorothy would just take a taste of my pies."

It was the cupboard and not the pies that Miss Bevis longed for. She hadn't eaten a piece of pie for years. Pie was considered quite out of the question as an article of diet in the Bevis household. But Miss Bevis was a woman possessed of some knowledge of the world. "When in Rome do as the Romans do." So she and Dorothy were presently seated upstairs in the sitting-room, with a section of rhubarb pie on a blue plate, with such an air of enjoyment that Mrs. Witham was pleased and proud. All the time the argument about the cupboard was going on, and Dorothy, after she had eaten two pieces of pie, went to the door and looked out; then she went down the steps, walked about the yard, made acquaintance with the pig and chickens. After what seemed to her

like a whole day had passed, Miss Bevis and Mrs. Witham, still talking, appeared in the porch. Mrs. Witham, still talking, kissed Dorothy. Miss Bevis and Dorothy got into the carriage, while Mrs. Witham, leaning over the gate, still talked. She was standing at the gate talking when they drove away; they heard her voice calling after them when they had quite disappeared from her view in a turn of the road.

But Miss Bevis was triumphant. She had carried her point. She was to have the old sideboard, and in its place was to have put up the most commodious cupboard that Sims, the cabinet-maker, knew how to build.

CHAPTER VII

THE DAMASK-ROSE PARTY

ONE afternoon, about the middle of June, Dorothy went over to the Bevis's to tell them the joyful news that Marcia Dundas was to arrive next day at two o'clock. Miss Bevis was almost as well pleased as was Dorothy herself, for the damask roses were almost in perfection, and she had just made up her mind that to-morrow was the day when she would invite Dorothy and the rectory children to help her make her potpourri of rose-leaves to fill the great rose-jars that stood in the garden-room. Miss Bevis felt that Marcia, coming as she did from a good old family, would have been brought up with all sorts of good old family traditions, and would appreciate the antique effects of the Bevis house, — the restored cabinets and the great jars of Delft and Canton china. Just then a visitor came to see Miss Bevis, and Dorothy went into the garden to look up Mr. Bevis, who was working pretty hard in these days. Of

course, having told Truett that the garden was to be run this summer according to the new and approved method, Mr. Bevis had no little feeling of pride in keeping things in good order. Truett pretended always to be at work at that row of currant-bushes, but Mr. Bevis was well aware that this was only an excuse for watching the proceedings of his master over the fence.

"It keeps me pretty busy," Mr. Bevis now confided to Dorothy. "It is really astonishing how the weeds grow. Just as soon as I get through one hoeing, the whole thing has to be gone over again. And if a shower comes in the night, or there is a rainy day, why I have to set to work for my life to fight the weeds. Then, besides the regular work, unexpected hindrances come in. Now those Lima beans," he continued plaintively, "I had to spend a whole day twining them round the poles. They seemed to want to run anywhere else. Then the corn blew down. However," said cousin Bevis triumphantly, "it pays! Just look at that parsley!"

The parsley was a picture.

"The late lettuce does n't head up as I want it to," cousin Bevis continued, "but it is a pretty good color for June lettuce."

“Beautiful,” said Dorothy.

“The peas — just see the peas!” now observed Mr. Bevis with a broad smile on his countenance. “Even Truett confesses that ‘it’s a good year for peas.’ Mark you, he does n’t admit it’s my superior gardening, he lays it to the weather.”

“You’ll soon be having string beans,” Dorothy now observed.

Thus the day before the damask-rose party everything seemed to be going on to perfection. They looked at the bees flying busily home, laden with honey. The calf had eaten two dish-towels that day, incidentally left within her reach, but otherwise had behaved very well. She really was a beauty, with those soft lovely eyes, and her fawn-colored coat was like satin.

“I don’t know,” said cousin Bevis with devout thankfulness, “what any man wants better than to have a place of his own and to raise his own vegetables by the sweat of his brow.”

He would have said more, but at this moment Miss Rachel came out with her visitor, Mrs. Dr. Goodlove, to stroll about the place and see the garden, and Mr. Bevis dodged behind a tree.

"Ask sister Rachel to look at the bees first, Dorothy," he whispered imploringly, "and I can slip in by the kitchen door."

For cousin Bevis had given himself up to nature this summer and avoided society.

On the following morning Dorothy came over again to ask Miss Bevis if she could help her in her preparations for the damask-rose party. Not finding Miss Rachel in the house, she strolled out, and met Mr. Bevis coming from the laundry with a tin can hanging on his arm.

"Oh, Dorothy!" he exclaimed, "the most dreadful thing has happened."

Dorothy's thoughts flew to the calf.

"Has Juno eaten anything more?" she inquired.

"It is n't Juno," said Mr. Bevis mournfully. He looked quite dejected and crushed, — it might partly be by the huge hat he wore. "It's worse than that. Do you smell this?"

"I could n't help smelling it as soon as I saw you," replied Dorothy. "I hope nothing has happened to the bees."

"It is n't the bees," said cousin Bevis, all the time walking towards the garden, Dorothy keeping along by his side.

"I hope nothing is wrong with the peas or

the beans or the tomato plants," Dorothy said, looking about anxiously.

"No, the beans and peas and tomato plants hav'n't come to grief *yet*."

"Is it potato-bugs?" suddenly demanded Dorothy.

"You know about potato-bugs, then?" exclaimed Mr. Bevis.

"Oh yes, John used to have potato-bugs at grandmamma's."

"Oh, if you had only told me," said Mr. Bevis mournfully. "If I had only been prepared, if I had even dreamed that such a thing could happen, — why then perhaps I might have stood the shock better. But I never could have brought myself to believe that my potatoes would behave so. Think of the time I've spent hoeing them! I was afraid that bugs might attack the squash vines, and every morning for a week I've been up at dawn to sprinkle soot on them. This very morning I came down early, and after I had gone over each squash vine I stood gloating over the sight of my potatoes. I thought they seemed to be glittering with dew. Later I discovered that all is not dew that glitters, — it can be the pestilent, the abominable, the unmentionable bug!"

It was evident that Mr. Bevis's emotion ran deep.

"Think, Dorothy, of how we planted those potatoes, you and I," he went on, almost with tears. "What pains we took to have exactly the right number of eyes in every hill! I have worked at them until my back has smarted, — and now to have them repay me like this!"

Dorothy shuddered. The little brownish reddish creatures on the leaves seemed to swell before her eyes.

"What are you going to do, cousin Bevis?" she asked.

"I am going to pick them off and put them in this can of coal oil," replied Mr. Bevis.

"Do they like coal oil?" Dorothy inquired wonderingly.

"Like it? I trust not. I hope they dislike it particularly."

"I suppose," observed Dorothy thoughtfully, "that it is not wrong to kill potato-bugs?"

"Wrong to kill potato-bugs? I hope it is. I long to do something wicked. I wish that all the potato bugs in the world had one head, so that I could dance on it all day."

"What does Truett say?"

"Truett says there's no particular harm done

by a potato-bug, — that he used to put on Paris green ” —

“ Could n’t you ” — began Dorothy ; but Mr. Bevis interrupted her with a groan.

“ There ’s the calf to think of. Sister Rachel almost fainted at the suggestion. No,” continued Mr. Bevis in the voice of one who knows his fate and meets it like a man, “ I’m going to sit down and pull off those creatures myself.”

“ Could n’t Truett ” — began Dorothy.

“ Oh, Truett,” said Mr. Bevis, with a gesture which indicated that assistance from that quarter was not to be expected ; “ Truett says there are worms on the currant-bushes.”

“ I ’ll help you,” said Dorothy. “ I will go and ask cousin Rachel for another can of oil.”

“ Sister Rachel is picking the rose-bugs off her damask roses,” explained Mr. Bevis. “ They came in the night like the host of the Assyrian.”

Really, this was a pretty state of things. Then when Dorothy went to the kitchen after the tin kettle, the cook’s face was all tied up, a bee having stung her on the lip. The bees were “ furious, raging,” the cook explained. And the calf, the calf had slipped its tether that morning and had got into the pantry and

drunk the milk, and next had rampaged generally and done no end of harm.

Yesterday everything had been so peaceful, so promising!

"I never expected to come to this," Mr. Bevis observed as soon as Dorothy reappeared. He had seated himself on a small stool between his potato hills and was picking off the enemy in handfuls. "Did you, Dorothy?"

"So many things happen," returned Dorothy with a little sigh, beginning her own operations on a populous plant in the next row. "Sometimes I do wonder what will happen next."

"I don't intend," pursued Mr. Bevis in a tone of philosophical inquiry, "to find fault with the general scheme of creation, — of course not. There must be a reason for things. I simply wish to observe that in certain directions creation seems to be overdone. A man has his own little notion of what is comfortable. Now if I had the chance to make a world I should, I think, leave out the insects."

"There could n't be any birds if there were no insects," said Dorothy.

"Who told you that?"

"Papa."

"Your papa is not a gardener, nor is he a

naturalist. This place is full of birds, but not one of them has touched a striped squash bug, — and really nobody could expect that a bird would eat these potato-bugs, and yet Truett has put up those scarecrows by the strawberry bed to keep off the robins.”

Dorothy reflected a moment, then exclaimed, “But, cousin Bevis, bees are insects.”

But that cousin Bevis would not admit. Bees had perhaps certain distinctive traits that belonged to insects; six legs, for example, two pairs of wings, antennæ, etc. In the same way, mankind, having a head and feet and body in common with, say, pigs, might be classed with pigs. But we know that we are not pigs, and exactly so a bee knows that it is not an insect.

“An insect,” proceeded Mr. Bevis, “is a contemptible object. It is a pestiferous, groveling creature. It destroys your peace of mind and of body. A self-respecting person does not wish to live with insects; one does not wish to fight with them; they are so small but so despotic, so diminutive yet so fiercely determined. Don’t you remember how Goliath said when he saw David, ‘I do not fight with boys. Bring me a man!’ One likes to feel one is hitting something of one’s own size.”

"I'm glad the potato-bugs are smaller than I am," said Dorothy. "If they were as big as we were" —

"Just fancy," said Mr. Bevis with a groan.

They worked in silence for a time. The sun in its full course had now climbed almost to the meridian, and its rays fell directly on the potato patch.

"Dorothy," inquired Mr. Bevis, "are you warm?"

"Well, rather warm," replied Dorothy.

There was another interval of silent, hard work. Then came, —

"Dorothy, do you ache?" from Mr. Bevis.

"A little," Dorothy was obliged to confess.

"Where?"

Dorothy moved a little as if to test her sensations.

"I think, perhaps, it's most in my shoulders."

"How about the small of your back?"

"Yes, it's pretty bad there."

"And your legs?"

"They feel pretty weak."

Luckily, Mr. Bevis had not given up his garden largely to potatoes, and by twelve o'clock the enemy was routed, — for the time being. Mr. Bevis sat down in the porch almost fainting.

Truett, overcome by his exertions, had also sat down in the kitchen, and was being revived by the cook and housemaid. Dorothy, after doing all she could for cousin Bevis's comfort, went to look up Miss Rachel, and found her in a state of collapse under the shade of the rhododendrons.

"Oh, Dorothy," exclaimed Miss Rachel, "was n't it dreadful? All in one night! Not one bug yesterday, and this morning, — oh, my dear! You should have seen them!"

"It does seem to me," said Dorothy, "that it's a creepy, crawly world."

"I thought," Miss Rachel went on, "of sending for you to come and help me. Truett was too busy, and brother Bevis does somehow manage to find so much to busy himself about in the garden. But I really felt as if I should prefer not to have the matter mentioned to Miss Dundas. I wish, Dorothy dear, you would promise me not to say anything about it to her. It does seem to rob a rose of its charm — particularly a damask rose — to think of an ugly insect having been at its heart. It is like the trail of the serpent."

Dorothy promised, while assuring Miss Rachel that nobody could even suspect that anything was wrong with the roses. They seemed the

perfection of bloom, their soft, lovely color shining against the background of glossy green laurel and rhododendron. The whole place was fragrant with their sweetness, and by four o'clock Marcia and the rectory children would be here, and they would all be picking the delicate petals and putting them away out of reach of danger.

Miss Rachel began to feel cheered.

"I do hope," she confided to Dorothy, "that your cousin Bevis will remember there is a young lady coming, and not wear that dreadful suit of clothes he goes about in. If you could give him a hint."

"Oh, but, cousin Rachel," cried Dorothy in consternation, "Marcia is n't a young lady."

"But she's not a mere child like you, and brother Bevis can be such a fine, scholarly-looking man. And I should like Miss Dundas to think that we kept up the place as such a fine old colonial place ought to be kept up."

"Oh, Marcia will not mind," said Dorothy. "Marcia's not a bit of a young lady."

However, when Dorothy, accompanied by Tish and Jem, went to the station to meet Marcia, and saw a tall girl alight from the train, she was for a moment a little startled. How-

ever, when the two were face to face, when they clasped hands and each looked into the other's eyes and said, "Oh, Marcia!" "Oh, Dorothy!" why then it was just the old story. Marcia was tall, she was beautiful, she was grand; but, nevertheless, it was just the same dear old Marcia, and always would be. Dorothy felt so many sensations rush together at once, they seemed to tie a knot in her throat; but presently she contrived to say,—

"Tish and Jem, this is Marcia."

It was so nice to have got over the introduction, and to have everybody well acquainted.

"I was so afraid you were grown up," Dorothy now said.

"I'm big enough, I know," said Marcia. "But that is all outside. Inside, I'm not really as much grown up as I used to be. I do long to have some fun." She looked at Tish. "I hope you do not like everybody to be on their good behavior."

"We have to be," Tish replied with a little sigh. "You see, being the clergyman's children, we are obliged to set an example to the parish. It's a very responsible position."

"I don't like settin' an example," Jem observed; "but I have to."

"I always did need an example," said Marcia. "I shall look at you both and learn how to be awfully good."

"I'm not good a bit," said Jem.

"Yes, he is good, generally," Tish put in. "Sometimes he has to let himself off."

They went on talking about being grown up. Tish declared that she held such a responsible position she had felt grown up ever since she could remember. Marcia said that she remembered one day about a year ago when she all at once began to like to have her hair tidy, and that had made a difference. Dorothy thought that possibly it meant that *she* was growing up because she hated nowadays to have her hands sticky, and washed them of her own accord.

"I dunno," said Jem, "whether I've grown up any, but I know I felt better after father gave me that three-bladed knife."

By this time they had reached the Clare's house, and Mrs. Clare stood in the porch holding out her arms to embrace Marcia.

At a quarter to four the rectory children all came for Dorothy and Marcia, and they set out for the Bevis place. Emily was quite in dismay at the sight of Marcia, and hung back, whispering in Peggy's ear:—

"She's a stranger. I don't like strangers."

"She isn't a stranger," Peggy whispered back. "She is Dorothy's friend."

But Emily shook her head, and when Marcia approached, retreated saying:—

"I don't know who she is at all. Please to explain."

It was, however, impossible to explain to Emily's satisfaction.

"I'm not half as bad as I look," said Marcia. "You'll be awfully fond of me in a few days, Emily."

"I don't think so," said Emily fastidiously.

"She's such a little thing," Peggy remarked to Marcia. "She doesn't know any better."

"Oh, yes; I know better," said Emily. "But I don't like strangers at all."

"Toby didn't like me at first," observed Marcia; "but if you notice, Toby is keeping close to me, and prefers me to most people."

This argument seemed to impress Emily, and by the time they were entering the great gate of the Bevis place she had slid her little hand into Marcia's.

The lawn was in shadow; but the great trees, as they stood motionless, not a leaf stirring, had the sunlight on their tops. Down below the

grass looked so green, so cool; and along the walk were ranged tubs where grew oranges and lemons, the yellow globes seeming still to hold the sunshine that had filled them in the morning.

"Oh, I never saw such a beautiful place," said Marcia, looking round her, and up at the tall trees towering against the sky.

Miss Bevis was pleased; that is, she was as much pleased as she could be with so much on her mind. She drew Dorothy aside presently, shaking her head and groaning.

"Have the rose-bugs come again?" Dorothy inquired anxiously.

"The robins have eaten up the strawberries," ejaculated Miss Rachel. "Truett was so long at the currant-bushes he could n't keep watch."

"Have the robins eaten them all up?" exclaimed Dorothy with dismay; for part of the pleasure of the afternoon was to have been in the strawberry feast.

"They have pecked at all the best ones," said Miss Rachel in a tragical voice, "and then Juno got in and ate and trampled down the rest."

"I said to cousin Bevis this morning," Dorothy replied with a sigh, "that I sometimes did wonder what would happen next."

However, she was consoled by the news that

Miss Rachel had ordered in some ice-cream to take the place of the strawberries; ice-cream could offer consolation for most troubles in the world, according to Dorothy's idea. So Miss Rachel went back to her guests, and Mr. Bevis, who had been showing Marcia the rose-jars arranged in the garden-room, approached Dorothy.

"Just go and listen to the bees," he whispered in Dorothy's ear. "It seems to me they're too lively. Truett will not confess that he sees anything wrong about them, but"—

"I suppose it's just their way," Dorothy said comfortingly. But when she went to the corner of the house and entered the drying-yard, she could hear the buzzing almost like distant thunder. Going nearer, she could see that the bees did show unusual activity, and were going up and down and in and out without any sort of reason. But dear me, they were always such wonderful, such incomprehensible creatures, nobody would think of predicting what they would be up to! So she went back and said, with a reassuring little nod,—

"I guess they're all right, cousin Bevis."

Miss Bevis was showing her antique sideboard and cabinet to Marcia. Nobody would have dreamed that those beautiful articles of furniture

which fitted so well into their surroundings in the Bevis dining-room, had ever been in humble circumstances. They had been "restored," as Mr. Bevis said, "within an inch of their lives." And it had been an expensive process. Mr. Bevis was telling Marcia that he had never dared ask his sister how much they had cost, but he had observed that ever since they came a rigid parsimony had crept into the housekeeping, and that it was as much as his life was worth to call for a second egg at breakfast.

"I can't see that she has had a new gown this summer," he added, and Miss Rachael retorted, —

"Have you had a new coat, brother Bevis?" and it was all very lively. Emily had taken Toby into a corner and was talking to him. Dorothy peered into the sideboard and thought of the hen who hatched her chickens there, and into the cabinet, and remembered all Captain Witham's pies, and wondered if they tasted as nice nowadays after being kept in a different cupboard.

"You have a fine old place yourself, Miss Dundas," Miss Rachel said, addressing Marcia.

"Oh yes," said Marcia. "I'm the only one of the Chauncey Dundases left in the world,

and the place is mine. Papa was born there and mamma died there, and somehow the place seems to me nowadays like my father and my mother. At any rate, it's all I have in the world of my own, and just as soon as I grow up I hope I may be able to earn some money to put it in repair."

"How are you going to make the money?" inquired Mr. Bevis.

Marcia was not quite sure. She would like to be a great painter, a great singer, a great writer, a great artist of some sort. She held out her two rather large, shapely hands.

"These hands have got to do something," she said. "If not the great things, why then, the little, every-day useful things. Somehow, earn money they must."

Dorothy felt sure that the great things of life must soon be within Marcia's grasp.

"Do you want some money?" Emily suddenly inquired.

"I have got to have lots of money to put my house in order," said Marcia.

"I'll ask my papa to give you five cents," said Emily.

Marcia hugged her. "You dear little thing! Your papa can give you five cents; but I have

no papa, and must make my own money. Other people's money burns one's fingers."

Now it was time to go and gather the damask-rose leaves. Miss Bevis gave each of the children a basket, rousing Jem, who, the moment he came into the house, had got at the volume of Froissart he loved, and was stretched on the floor reading it.

"Dear me," said Miss Rachel to Marcia, "it does n't seem to me so very long ago that I was a little young creature, and that on just such a summer afternoon as this I went out with my grandmother Bevis to gather the damask roses."

"Were you ever young, cousin Rachel?" Peggy inquired with intense surprise.

"Oh, yes; once I was as young as you or Emily," said Miss Rachel rather gayly. "I can remember that somebody held up a rose leaf to my cheek and said he could n't see the difference in the texture or color."

"That must have been a long time ago," observed Peggy, looking at Miss Rachel thoughtfully.

"Well, my dear, how old do you suppose I am?" Miss Rachel inquired.

"About a hundred," said Peggy.

"More 'n a hundred, I should think," observed Emily with a little nod.

All of which was very funny to Mr. Bevis and Miss Rachel; for they had gone through it all, and knew that some day little Emily and Peggy would be older, and would be telling wondering children that they also were once young creatures picking roses in the summer sunshine.

Dorothy was so pleased to see Marcia's delight in the garden. "It's as beautiful as a dream," she said.

And indeed a magical light seemed to rest upon the garden, with its masses of roses; then, besides, there were all the Canterbury bells, the sweet Williams, the larkspurs, the pinks, the iris of all kinds and colors; not to speak of the blaze of the poppies. And after depths on depths of color and bloom, there was the background of syringas, all in full flower and fragrance, and beneath them a whole army of fox-gloves, with their lovely white and purple spears raised.

They all stood still with a bewitched sense of the beauty of things. Again Marcia said, —

"It is as beautiful as a dream."

They were suddenly roused by a short, bristling bark of suppressed indignation from Toby,

who had walked on in advance. Peggy and Emily rushed to see what he was barking at. Then came an exclamation from Peggy.

“Oh, you naughty calf; oh, you wicked calf! Oh, cousin Rachel, come and see!”

They all went. They all saw. They were all conquered. If the flower garden had been a dream, the sight of the damask-rose garden was a nightmare.

Nobody ever knew how the calf got in, or where she got in. Somebody explained that she had probably heard the children's voices and, loving their society, she had tried to reach them. On the way, however, Juno had come upon the damask roses, and had eaten them all up. A few leaves on the soft, closely-clipped grass remained to tell the tale, but only a few. Having had a good meal, Juno, head down and tail in air, was executing a war dance.

“I never heard of such a thing,” somebody said.

“I never did hear of such a thing,” from another.

“In all my life I never did hear of such a thing.”

“Never in all my born days!” that was Mr. Bevis's remark.

Emily alone declined to commit herself to such a statement. She stood looking at Juno's capers with her mouth wide open. What she said was, —

“I suppose she was hungry, poor thing.”

“This is, of course, the charitable way of looking at it,” said Mr. Bevis. “When one regards it in that light, potato-bugs are like the young ravens when they cry, their mouths must be filled. Why should n't the robins be applauded for stopping the open mouths of their brood with strawberries? All these creatures have to forage for themselves. But what a system of things has to exist for that calf! All the sunbonnets, the dish-towels, the maid's aprons, and now the damask roses!”

Mr. Bevis was trying to comfort Miss Rachel, who had sat down and was weeping. Jem could n't take the matter so philosophically. He had borne a grudge against that calf for some time. There was an absence of responsibility in the way that calf had gone on; a general “don't care” attitude in the way she kicked up her heels and left other people to set an example to the parish, which had roused Jem's wrath. He had long wanted to go at that calf, and now he went.

What he particularly longed to do was to twist her tail. His tactics were these; he put down his head and made a feint of attacking her in front, expecting that she would turn tail and retreat, when, by a skillful movement, he might arrive at the summit of his wishes.

But that tail knew very well how to take care of itself. Juno had not been practicing her manœuvres all these weeks without being mistress of them. When Jem put his head down and made his onslaught, down went her head and, as if saying that two could play at that game, she dashed at Jem. Over he tumbled, and had the pleasure of seeing that tail flirt through the gate into the laundry-yard. The enemy had fled; but still Jem seemed to have had the worst of it. Picking himself up, he ran after her. He was already in a state of wrath, and the sight of the calf dancing on her fore-legs, kicking out her hind ones, did not lessen his indignation. Twisting that tail was no longer enough to satisfy his ambition. He wanted to give the creature a general drubbing.

The calf, observing Jem's approach, stood still one instant regarding him with her beautiful, mild eyes; then, as if she thought him in play, began to make leaps, coming down first on her

fore-legs, then on her hind-legs, Jem meantime pommeling the air, not ever being able to touch her; until, as she pranced forward, down went her head, and down went Jem again.

The children had by this time all straggled after Jem and the calf; Toby sitting down on his hind-legs and regarding the combat in a knowing way, as if he were umpire. Just as the second round was over, a cry came from the girls, —

“ Oh, Jem ! ”

“ Don’t, Jem ! ”

“ Oh, Jem, you must n’t ! ”

Then from Emily, —

“ Go it ! Keep it up ! ”

Jem was of the same mind. He meant to keep it up. He had discovered that the calf was not so easily beaten. This time he decided to collect his thoughts, stand off a little, and try to remember how a hunter stalked a stag. The calf would n’t wait to be stalked, however. Forward she dashed, knocked Jem over, and then, having him prostrate on the turf, began to dance on him.

The girls had clung to each other in turns during the fray; but, seeing Jem go down for the third time, and lie there at the calf’s mercy,

they rushed forward to help him. All but Emily, who rather liked the fun, and was as ready to say, "Go it, calf," as "Go it, Jem." Marcia had stayed behind to comfort Miss Rachel for the loss of her roses. She now appeared, coming through the wicket with Mr. Bevis. It was never Marcia's way to look on passively, and she was about to fly to Jem's aid, when a new and powerful auxiliary turned the fate of the battle. Nobody who had watched that calf's career could have failed to believe that a just retribution must come at last.

If Jem and the calf had not been making such a rumpus, it would have been observed that the buzzing of the bees had for the last half hour been growing louder and louder. All day they had, in fact, been preparing to swarm, and now, just as Jem for the third time got the worst of it, out they came from the hive like a cloud. The calf in her ordinary behavior would have been no object, but happening in her gambols over Jem's body to jump high up in air, she happened to get within reach of the bees, and instantly they settled upon her head; covering her eyes, invading her ears, her lips, and hanging there in clusters.

There could be no doubt but that Jem was

avenged ! Down went Juno on her back and pawed the air ; she stood upon her head ; great cries and groans bursting from her.

For a minute everybody, taken by surprise, stood helpless. The whole household had gathered ; Truett, the cook, the upper maid, and the parlor maid. If it had been only the bees, as Truett said afterwards, he might have remembered what to do. If it had been only the calf he might have known what to do. As it was, with both together, he simply stood and stared. The cook stood and stared. The two maids, not wishing to put themselves in such danger, retreated and hid behind the drying poles.

It was Mr. Bevis who called in a stentorian voice : —

“ Rachel, my gloves ! ”

“ Truett, the empty hive ! ”

“ Cook, make a smudge ! ”

All this took only a minute. To the calf it was probably an eternity, for a minute can seem very long. Then Miss Rachel had brought the gloves, Truett had caught up the empty hive, the cook was lighting the smudge, and Jem, who had picked himself up, secured the calf by the tether.

Then off flew the bees.

"I know what to do," cried Marcia. "Let me have a tin pan."

Dorothy and Tish rushed to the kitchen and found a pan. Marcia, seizing it, began to beat upon it, following the swarm of bees that, zig-zagging across the lawn, were gradually rising a little higher and a little higher. Now how could Marcia have possibly found out what to do? Suddenly she began to climb up a cedar that supported a great Virginia creeper. Then, sitting down on the bough, she played on the tin pan, until the cloud of bees encompassing her took a mind to settle on the branch beside her. Mr. Bevis and Truett with a step-ladder followed with the empty hive. The swarm was secured. Nobody was very much hurt, except the calf, who was rubbing her mouth and nose in a huge pan of milk. She deserved to be hurt a little. The others all went in presently and ate the ice-cream, feeling that it had been a singularly exciting afternoon.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAZAAR

THAT afternoon at the Bevises had been as good as a whole year of ordinary experience in the way of making the children feel well acquainted with Marcia. Marcia entered into the life at High Elms in her energetic way. Tish was getting up a bazaar to raise money for the "Children's Summer Home," which gave a pleasant outing of a week or two to poor little waifs and strays picked up in the streets of New York. Into this enterprise Marcia flung herself enthusiastically, making pin-cushions, dressing dolls, painting flowers on silk and wood. Whatever Marcia did made Dorothy more proud than anything she could herself accomplish. When anybody said, "What a very clever girl your friend Marcia is," Dorothy's cheeks grew bright pink, her eyes full of light, and she kept smiling and dimpling for hours afterwards.

Dorothy herself was knitting a pair of slippers for the bazaar, which Mr. Bevis had promised

to buy ; but somehow those slippers would not get finished. She used to try getting up early in the morning to knit ; but no matter how early she was up, something or other was up before her ready to take her mind off her work. One day it was a thrush on a cherry-tree in the garden that sang, oh so exquisitely ! Again, a wonderful rose had come out and hung heavy with drops of dew ! Then once more, a queer little creature went hopping across the lawn, — some wild thing from the woods, perhaps a rabbit, perhaps a hare ! The gardener said it came to steal his lettuce and peas, but surely it was a great privilege to have anything to offer to this dear little soft-eyed creature. Dorothy would gladly have gone without her dinner (or so she thought and said) to feed the stranger. But all these excitements got in the way of the slippers being finished, and she was just beginning to say, “Oh dear, what will Cousin Bevis think?” when lo and behold ! there the slippers were all ready for the bazaar, the crocheted uppers sewed into the lamb’s-wool soles and beautiful ribbons run in ! Who but Marcia could have done such a thing ?

Lucy and Gaynor Lee were to arrive the day before the bazaar. Before Marcia had come,

long and anxious were Dorothy's and Tish's discussions as to whether she should have the white room and Lucy the blue room, or Lucy the white room and Marcia the blue. Mrs. Clare, when appealed to, had settled it by advising that Marcia should be given her choice. Marcia had chosen the white room, just the one Dorothy had wished and had taken joy in fitting up for her. It was fortunate that this knotty point was settled, for there were so many other things to be done in the way of preparation for Lucy and Gay. The word W-E-L-C-O-M-E had to be printed with pins on the pin-cushion in Lucy's room. Just the right books had to be carried up to fill Gay's bookshelf in the little room in the third story where he was to sleep. That was the beginning; we will skip the middle, and arrive at the final touch, which was to dress both rooms with flowers. Then on Friday morning the children all set off in a body to meet the visitors, who were to come at 10-17. Marcia, Dorothy, Toby, Tish, Jem, Peggy, and little Emily all stood in a row on the platform when the cars stopped. John Lee (the twins' eldest brother on his way to New York) waved his hand to Dorothy and Marcia, lifted the children down, then jumped on again. The train was

off. There stood Gay and Lucy, looking, oh so dear and so familiar. Why was it that instead of their rushing forward to meet Marcia and Dorothy, and Marcia and Dorothy rushing forward to greet Lucy and Gay, Marcia began to laugh and went on laughing as if something intensely amusing had occurred? And Dorothy, instead of uttering the words on her lips, "Dear Lucy and Gay, I am so glad to see you!" ejaculated, "If there is n't Carlo!"

For, pressing against the twins to show them he was there and wagging his tail, was a black dog with a fine expressive head, and also a fine expressive manner.

"Isn't it perfectly dreadful?" said Lucy, now advancing. She was in tears. "We had n't the least idea in the world that he was with us until we were at New Haven. We could n't tell what to do."

"We d-d-did n't d-d-dare tell John," faltered Gay. "He never d-d-did like C-C-Carlo."

Marcia, still laughing, was submitting to having Carlo stretch up his fore-paws and lick her face. "It always was so," she said. "Carlo always would go everywhere. It's just like Mary's little lamb! Mary loved the lamb you know, and so do we."

Dorothy had put her arms round Carlo.

"I do love him dearly," she said. "I must introduce him to Toby."

Carlo's spirits had risen from zero to the highest pitch. He was rarely at a loss, but he had felt for a moment bewildered, out of place, lost. Where the twins went he felt it was his right and duty to go, so he had slunk into the train at Swallowfield and hidden himself beneath the seat. Such a position doesn't make a dog proud. Then when he had nestled against Gay's leg and Gay had made the frightful discovery that Carlo was there,—oh, it had been very painful. Carlo had had a bad half hour. Here he was, however, caressed, made much of, by old friends, just as such a superior dog ought to be! He barked politely when introduced to Toby; then when Toby would not condescend even to look in his direction, Carlo pretended to be barking at something up the street.

"What will Mrs. Clare say?" faltered Lucy, tears of mortification still falling.

"Oh, mamma will not mind," said Dorothy.

Dorothy and Marcia of course made the introductions between Gay and Lucy and the rectory children. Tish was very nice,—Tish always was nice. But you should have seen

Jem and Gay meet. They took to each other astonishingly. Gay was older than Jem, but Gay and Lucy were both small and slight for their age, with little heads, smooth brown hair, blue eyes, and dear little faces. So Gay and Jem were of about the same height, and of the two Jem looked the older. As far as the girls could perceive, the boys did not exchange many words; but when their eyes met a curious look of satisfaction came over their faces, and when the party took their way homeward they at once fell behind together. Lucy, a little surprised to have Gay thus desert her on the instant, kept looking back, and saw to her further astonishment that the two boys were vaulting solemnly over every hitching-post they came to on their way up the street.

“Why do they do that?” she asked Tish in dismay.

“Oh, they’re just boys,” answered Tish. Tish had discovered that when a boy is a boy, he is somehow to be accepted with all his peculiarities. Lucy could not, however, feel sure but that Gay would be led off the safe and narrow path in which she had kept him so long, and as she was a little doubtful what Mrs. Clare would say to Carlo, it must be confessed that she had a good deal on her mind.

Mrs. Clare, however, was delighted to see Carlo ; and when Dorothy said that it made her unhappy to think of poor Flossy left behind, to eat out his heart with loneliness, Mr. Clare declared that Flossy must come, too, that he would write and ask Mrs. Lee to have Flossy sent by express.

Mr. Bevis raised his hands in despair when he saw the three new-comers. "I can't keep up with you, Dorothy," he said plaintively. "Every morning since I came to High Elms I've spent all my time before getting up trying to remember the names of the children. There are five at the rectory, and I don't like to hurt Dr. Nicoll's feelings by not seeming to see that they are different from peas in a pod. So I say to myself: 'There's Tish and Jem and Peggy and Emily, besides the baby ; the baby is a boy.' So I struggle along. I took you in, Dorothy, because you're so small you don't matter much. And when you brought Marcia, why, I got hold of her name, for she is so big you can't help seeing Marcia. But here are three more, — a pair of twins and a dog. How would it do to call them Great A, Little A, Bouncing B?"

It was really a lucky circumstance that Flossy

could not arrive on the minute, for friendship has its limits.

However, Mr. Bevis could be relied on to buy everybody's things at the bazaar. He came with his pockets full, having taken the precaution to get his money changed into silver pieces. Little Emily sold him a nosegay every three minutes, for which she demanded five cents. Cousin Bevis's right-hand trousers pockets were full of nickels, and his left of dimes. Sometimes, to Emily's advantage, he got mixed, and would have given her ten cents instead of five for a bouquet, if she had allowed it; but to Emily's imagination five cents represented the very tiptop and apex of riches. A dollar could do no more. Cousin Bevis did not stop at dimes. In his coat pockets were quarters and half dollars, and great big silver dollars. For Dorothy's slippers he paid a bank note, otherwise she would have had, he said, to carry the amount home in a wheelbarrow. Oh, how much money he was obliged to spend! It was "Cousin Bevis, don't you want this?" and "Cousin Bevis, don't you want that?" A swarm of bees, he declared, was nothing to it. Oh, to be at home contentedly and frugally picking off potato-bugs! This was so expensive.

Besides the girls with their handkerchiefs and mufflers and cigarette cases and watchguards, there were the boys, Jem and Gay, demanding money from him as well. You must understand that the bazaar was held on the back lawn at the rectory. Tables were set under the trees, at each of which one of the little girls presided. At the foot of the lawn was Jem's railroad, and the ticket agent (Gay) booked you to any part of the world you wished to arrive at, — Cochin China, Manila, anywhere at all, for twenty-five cents. The name was written on the ticket, the small locomotive, which kept sissing and puffing, gave an extra snort of wrath at being so overworked, and off it set (you walking on by its side), and in another minute the conductor (Jem) was calling out Cochin China, Manila, the Hebrides, or whatever remote part of the world you happened to be booked for. Then, as soon as you arrived, there was Peggy, offering you sandwiches, cakes, and glasses of lemonade at five cents apiece. As cousin Bevis remarked, it was perfectly astonishing how small the world was. A man could n't get rid of civilization any more, no matter where he went; unless, perhaps, solitude might still be found in the Desert of Sahara.

Accordingly, just simply, as he said, to be able to breathe and call his soul his own, he took a ticket to the Desert of Sahara. Was n't it the very oddest thing in the world? The conductor called the Desert of Sahara, and there cousin Bevis was at the Desert of Sahara, and there also was Peggy with her cakes and lemonade. Cousin Bevis gave it up. Globe trotting was no longer of any earthly use. You might just as well stay at home.

When Dorothy had sold everything on her table, cousin Bevis nailed up a little placard on which was printed, "The Learned Dog," and Toby was put through his tricks for the benefit of anybody who would pay ten cents:—hunt the slipper, jumping over a cane, catching balls in his mouth, playing ball, singing, etc. Toby did not mean to be proud. Of course, he was well aware that he knew more than any other dog, and even more than most people; but he tried to act as if he felt "'umble," and no matter how much he was praised, behaved as if he did not enjoy himself a bit. But in spite of his looking "'umble," Toby and his performances managed to stir up all the jealousy of which Carlo was capable, mixed with not a little wrath. There was the "learned dog" going through his

tricks on a table, and there was Carlo watching him with surprise, with scorn, with rage, swelling up as if he would burst, every now and then emitting a quick bark. It was something quite new in Carlo's experience that a four-footed creature could be so ridiculous. "Is it a dog?" he seemed to be inquiring incredulously, "or is it a gentleman?"

I rather suspect that Toby, looking out from his tangle of hair, enjoyed the chance of showing this interloper, this queer, uninvited guest, how a well-bred dog could behave. Never had he gone through his tricks so beautifully.

Carlo had his friends, nevertheless. Marcia and Gay and Lucy understood him and felt for him. They decided that he, too, should be exhibited on Marcia's empty table. So up went Carlo, and there he stood to everybody's admiration, particularly his own, wagging his tail and looking so pleased, offering an occasional bark just to help on the effect. Toby did not seem to see, — but no doubt he did see.

Afterwards Marcia appeared, dressed like a gypsy girl, and told fortunes. There was a good deal of sameness, perhaps; if you crossed her palm with ten cents you were to go on a journey; with a quarter of a dollar, honor and

riches were coming. When cousin Bevis put his last silver dollar in her hand, Marcia, naturally wishing to promise him something superior in the way of good fortune, told him he was to be married three times.

Cousin Bevis was a very unhappy man for the rest of the day. "Three times," he would exclaim in anguish, "three times!"

CHAPTER IX

FOURTH OF JULY AT HIGH ELMS

“I SUPPOSE,” Lucy would say anxiously to Dorothy and Marcia, “that Jem is a good boy?”

There could be no doubt of Jem’s having an excellent character. He had been brought up to feel that he must set an example to the parish, and in all respects did credit to his raising and to the care of Tish. Mr. Clare vouched for Jem; so did Mrs. Clare; and as for Dorothy, she was ready to assure Lucy that Jem was as good as gold. Still Lucy could not get over the fact of Gay’s having deserted her for Jem. Something seemed to have come between the twins; there were mysteries to which Lucy was not admitted. The two boys had established a code of signals by flash-light.

“It’s only because it is Fourth of July,” said Dorothy. She was a little excited herself over the idea of the Fourth. Mr. Bevis had said

that he had all his life felt a longing to let off fireworks, which up to the present time he had held in check; but this year he intended to buy rockets, Roman candles, Catherine wheels, etc. Mr. Clare had also laid in a stock; and as the Clare house stood higher than the Bevis place, Mr. and Miss Bevis and the rectory people were all to come to high tea at half past seven on the evening of the Fourth, and later there was to be quite an extensive display of fireworks. Dorothy could not keep the glory and splendor of this great occasion out of her own thoughts, so she did not blame Gay for having his head full of it.

"He is going over to stay all night with Jem," Lucy confided to the girls tearfully. "He asked Mrs. Clare if he could, and she said he might."

"Of course if mamma said he might go, it is all right," said Dorothy.

"I'm afraid"—Lucy began, when Marcia interrupted her with, —

"Oh, let Gay have a little fun. Of course we girls have fun in our way, but boys have their way. I sometimes think that to have real fun one must be a puppy or a colt or a calf or a lamb or a boy." Nevertheless, Lucy was right

in thinking that something was going on. It was after Jem had come over to the Clares' and gone up with Gay to look at his room that the scheme of Gay's spending the night at the rectory had been broached. Something was in the wind. Even Carlo sniffed it and kept on the watch.

Jem and Gay were hardly through their supper that night of the third, when they declared themselves so sleepy that they must go to bed at once.

"Of course," said the knowing Tish, "they mean to be up at sunrise and help ring the bells."

It was Emily who was particularly wide awake. All day she had asked everybody to explain what Fourth of July was; and the idea that it meant fireworks, with the suggestion of an occasional popping of fire-crackers, had excited her. She objected to going to bed.

"But why don't you want to go, dear?" said Tish.

"I'm afraid," said Emily.

"Afraid of what? There's nothing to be afraid of. The fireworks won't come till tomorrow."

"It is n't fireworks I'm afraid of," said

Emily. "I am afraid, I'm afraid of — drowning."

"Afraid of drowning!" repeated Tish. "Why how could you drown? There's no water except what is in your jug."

But Emily shrieked and shuddered, and kept on saying she was afraid.

"That's all nonsense," Tish declared. "There's nothing to be afraid of. Nothing can come to you in your nice little bed in your nice little room."

"There's angels, and there's rats," said Emily.

However, Tish put Emily to bed soon after sunset, and then looked in to see about Jem and Gay. It had seemed to her, as she came along the hall, that she had heard a suppressed laugh; but no, there were the two boys sound asleep, each in his little camp bed. It was half odd that they could have fallen asleep so soon, for the sunset still showed in the west through the interlaced branches of the elms, and robins and thrushes were still singing in the sweet half dusk. The boys were sleeping, however, as if they were giving their whole minds to it.

"They want to get up very early," Tish said to Peggy, and Tish was quite right. The boys meant to be up very early.

By half past ten the last light was out at the rectory, and various sounds of closing shutters and sliding bolts had made it clear that even Dr. Nicoll was on his way to bed. After having pretended to be sleeping at the rate of ten knots an hour ever since eight o'clock, both boys were by this time very sleepy indeed. Gay had more than once found himself dozing off, and had pinched himself, apparently all in vain. He was startled by being pulled out of bed, and found himself standing upright with his bare feet on the cold floor.

"I say," whispered Jem, "it is almost eleven o'clock."

They had not undressed, had only taken off their shoes and stockings and jackets. Their shoes and stockings were all ready in a bag. "It is so easy to drop a shoe and make a noise," Teddy Goodlove had said. The room was over the square, front porch, and the window stood wide open to the summer night. There had been a very good reason for Gay's coming to stay with Jem, for Gay could never have left his room at Mrs. Clare's without letting the whole family into the secret. Here there was nothing to do but clamber out of the window on top of the porch, and, holding on to the stout

wistaria vine, descend by the ladder-like trellis. Both the boys had practiced this feat until they were perfect in it, so now within two minutes they were safely on the ground, putting on their stockings and shoes.

So far all had gone well. Not even the snapping of a twig had broken the silence of the night. In the rectory grounds it seemed very dark. The moon, just at its first quarter, was somehow tangled up in the willow-trees, and could only here and there cast an unbroken beam of light. To avoid one patch of moonshine on the terrace, the boys crept through the shadows, and, running against a shrub, were startled by having a dozen sparrows fly out and hit their faces. They still had to go down the terrace steps, cross the garden, where tall white flowers stood up and seemed to point at them. Jem and Gay turned their heads away. They might repent their evil deeds to-morrow, but that was a long way off.

They were waited for. Outside the back gate were five boys.

"Have you got the key of the bell-tower?" one of them asked Jem.

"Here it is," said Jem, and his face burned.

"All right. We've got all three of the others."

"How about the powder?" Jem inquired, with an air of preferring another subject to that of the keys.

"Enough to bust up all High Elms," said Harry West. He was the leader of the ring; he "bossed the job," as he himself said. Jem had not liked to obey orders which forced him to steal the key of the belfry. But this news about the powder was glorious. In old days there had been a cannon belonging to the village of High Elms, which always assisted at the Fourth of July celebrations. It had broken down very honorably after one of the rounds fired in honor of some victory of the Civil War, and now made a dumb show in front of the Soldiers' Monument. The only real cannon High Elms could boast of belonged to Major Littlejohn, who had mounted it on his lawn overlooking the river. Major Littlejohn did not seem to be the sort of man to ask a favor of. The boys accordingly had decided that it would be doing him a favor to drag his cannon to the top of Academy Hill and celebrate without asking his permission. Was n't it Fourth of July? Did n't Major Littlejohn love his country? Ought he not to be proud to help preserve the tradition of High Elms, and keep up a spirit of true patriotism?

The boys had unanimously decided that Major Littlejohn ought to be proud and happy to contribute his cannon, and off they trooped to bring it now. The first thing to do was to get the cannon off Major Littlejohn's grounds without rousing the owner, who, although certain to be pleased on the morrow, might offer certain objections to-night. Harry West and Teddy Goodlove had oiled all the running gear the night before, and, as Teddy remarked, "The cannon behaved like a brick." There was not a creak, not a rustle, until they reached the graveled path outside. Possibly three or four people turned on their pillows that night, and wondered what was the sound of the crunching of the sand under wheels. But not Major Littlejohn, whose ears, luckily for the boys, were not the very keenest.

The task did not turn out to be too easy. To begin with, the cannon had seemed astonishingly light. By the time they were toiling up the ascent of Academy Hill it had become astonishingly heavy. How hot the night had grown! How the boys panted! How each one confided to the one next him that he couldn't push another step to save his life. However, to give up now would be to give up

all that life offered worth having. So they went on pulling and tugging and pushing, and before half past eleven there was the mounted cannon pointing to the sky in the great empty space between the academy and the church.

After getting the artillery into place, it was nothing at all to roll up three empty tar barrels which had been lying for a week concealed in the corner of the old unused cemetery. These were piled one on top of the other, some fifty feet away from the cannon. There were also produced from some hiding-place eight fish-horns. The preparations were now complete, and yet it still was only a quarter to twelve. Fifteen whole minutes before High Elms was to be startled out of its beauty-sleep. What could they do to pass the time? How fill up this gap? The boys would have liked to do something magnificent, grand; something twelve feet high that reached the stars. Not being able to think of great things, it seemed great fun to do something small, and accordingly off came the gates from the hinges all along the street. Jem and Gay had tugged at the cannon; they had rolled the tar barrels; they had even in a half-hearted way helped to lift the great gate of the Bevis place off its hinges. They had done their

fair share of the work, and even more, and their souls were filled with a proud sense of their having done as well as the biggest, even if they were the littlest of the gang.

“What’s that?” Jem suddenly inquired in a whisper.

“It’s Carlo,” replied Gay. “He always has to be in everything.”

Jem had finally become conscious of something black moving along by their side. Had it been lighter it might have been seen that Carlo had taken part in all the proceedings. His quick ears had heard sounds which escaped duller ones; he had perceived that something was going on. He had not meant to be left out of the fun, — not he! He had recognized the necessity for silence, had hushed every bark, had followed in the most stealthy way. Gay felt rather proud of him.

It was now almost twelve o’clock. By this time five stragglers had joined the ranks, and all twelve boys fell into marching order. Four were told off for the ringing of the bells of the three churches and of the academy; the others took the tin fish-horns. The moment had come. After the silence, the suppression, the pent-up feeling of excitement, there was to be a general outburst.

The moment the church clock began to strike twelve, the eight boys posted under the trees by the Congregational church blew a blast on their horns, — oh, what a blast! It would have been only what was to be expected to have the walls of Jericho go down before it. Then another and a louder blast! It seemed almost strange to see the tall elms stand motionless against the sky. Then began the bells! pealing, pealing, rolling, rolling! And with the clashing of the bells and the blast of the horns, down the street marched the boys and Carlo. “Lo, the conquering hero comes!” was nothing to it. The feeling that everybody was roused, that shutters and blinds and curtains were being thrust aside, that heads were poking out of every window, that everybody was questioning and scolding; all this smiting their consciences added to the reckless joy in the being alive to do this wicked thing.

Never was there such a din! If one boy stopped to take breath, the others blew all the harder. Yet the best was yet to come; this march with the horns was the mere beginning. They had reached the foot of the hill; they were rushing madly up as if to storm a fort. Two were to fire the cannon, two to light the tar

barrels, the others in a phalanx were to blow one final blast together which was to be the signal. Blow, ye trumpets, blow! They blew. Off went the cannon, shaking the earth to its foundations. Up blazed the tar barrels. Then came a second explosion, a burst like an earthquake.

"The boys, oh, where were they?"

There was a sound of shattered glass. Jem and Gay knew nothing of what had happened, but found themselves lying in the road with their mouths full of dust.

"I wonder where Carlo is," gasped Gay. "It seems to me I heard Carlo cry."

Although the whole hill was brilliantly illuminated by the bonfire, Carlo was nowhere to be seen.

The bells kept pealing, pealing, pealing, pealing; not until the dawn whitened the east were the iron tongues silent.

Major Littlejohn's cannon, however, had uttered its last word.

CHAPTER X

FOURTH OF JULY, CONTINUED

"YES, father," said Jem. "I know that I ought to set an example, and I do generally mean to keep settin' an example, but I can't keep on settin' an example every single day of the year."

Jem had been called up to the rector's study after breakfast on that fourth of July morning.

"I don't know why not," said Dr. Nicoll sternly. "If we are to do right when we please and do wrong when we please, what is the worth of an example?"

Jem put on an air of concern, but just how deeply penitent he was his father did not feel sure.

"It takes years of conscientious striving towards the best to build up a fine character," Dr. Nicoll continued. "Even then all one has striven for may be lost by a moment's foolishness." He paused and shook his head at the chubby, freckled face upturned to his as if he

saw all Tish's efforts to bring up her brother in the way he should go defeated by this terrible falling-off.

"It was very dangerous as well," continued the rector in a softer voice. "I feel as if all you boys had had a very narrow escape, — as if you had been mercifully spared out of pity for your presumption, your ignorance. Why, Jem, it is the most astonishing thing in the world that the cannon could have burst without killing or maiming some of you. They say that parts of it are buried six feet deep in the earth."

It must be confessed that Jem's eyes sparkled at this statement. Even though his every joint and muscle still quivered from the shock of that explosion, although it rang in his ears, burned in his eyes, although his head ached with it, his back and legs and arms were sore with it, it was surely something worth living for to have assisted in such a catastrophe. That the cannon had been blown to pieces added glory and splendor to the celebration. It had done its best. In fact, bits of that cannon are dug up to this day in the village of High Elms.

"I find them in the garden, for there's many hereabout,
And often when I go to plough, the ploughshare turns them
out,"

as was told of the results of another famous victory. It was unlucky that all the glass on Academy Hill was broken, also that one small bolt had crashed through the chapel window and injured the organ. But accidents will happen; if you chop wood, chips will fly.

Let us go back to the events of that midnight.

At the first blast from the horns Tish jumped out of bed.

"I felt it, I guessed it, I almost knew it all the time," she murmured to herself, "only I did n't quite take it in."

For the next quarter of an hour events succeeded each other with such startling rapidity it is impossible to describe their full effect. The blare of the horns, the clashing of the bells, had already made the night hideous, when all at once,

"Then shook the hills with thunder riven,

.

And louder than the bolts of heaven

Far flashed the red artillery."

For, along with the burst of the cannon, came the lurid light from the burning tar barrels.

The angry clarion of the bells was still going on when Tish, gazing forth from her window

with wrath and despair, heard a little voice from below, and looking down saw a little figure in white.

“Tish, Tish,” it called.

“Oh, what is it?” cried Tish. “Who is it?”

“It’s me. It’s Lucy Lee,” said the little trembling voice. “Please tell me if Gay is safe in bed.”

Until this moment Tish had forgotten that Gay had stayed with Jem. She knew by the quaver of that tone all the anguish of suspense and dread that was racking Lucy. To put off the evil moment, to give Lucy one breath more of hope, she said, —

“I’ll go in Jem’s room and see.”

Of course he was not there; of course both boys were mixed up with this shocking business.

“Yes, I’ll look,” she said again, and she did look. Wonderful to relate, there the boys were, Jem in his bed and Gay in his, apparently both sound asleep. One little heart in High Elms grew lighter at that news, and the forlorn little Lucy went back in her bare feet through the wet grass to Mrs. Clare’s with devout thankfulness.

But when morning came, of course everybody knew. Gay had a tender conscience; and, be-

sides, he was wretched over the idea that Carlo had been hurt when the cannon went to pieces. He was up at sunrise, looking for Carlo, calling for Carlo, whistling for Carlo. All in vain. It was Toby, finally, who found Carlo. Dorothy said to him, "Go and find Carlo," and Toby at once let out the secret. Carlo was curled up in the midst of the clump of rhododendrons, and Gay had to crawl in on his hands and knees to get at him. It may be that Carlo told Toby the whole story, for Toby sat by him all day, and the two dogs became great friends. But Carlo never said a word to anybody else about his part in the Fourth of July celebration, and it was not until Flossy, the white Pomeranian, arrived in high spirits on the fifth, that he really cheered up. He was not hurt visibly, but seemed stiff and sore; he examined himself as if he suspected there was more than met the eye; drank a great deal of water, ate little, and soon mended. Jem and Gay were sure they knew what ailed Carlo; they knew the symptoms. They never told, however. They had to meet their sisters' reproaches.

"Oh, Gay," Lucy would say tearfully, "you might have been dreadfully hurt."

"But I was n't, you know," Gay would reply;

“so it’s all right so long as C-C-Carlo is n’t really hurt.”

Every time Tish saw Jem that day she would say, —

“Oh, Jem, I’m so shocked.”

“Could n’t help it, — had to do it,” was Jem’s answer.

This shuffling off of the moral responsibility did not take Tish in. She knew better. Even when Jem and Gay were ordered to put back the gates they had helped unhinge and carry off the night before, they did not lose their high spirits. They were soon to find out the great lesson of life, that “Who breaks, pays;” but all this Fourth of July morning, although they were supposed to be in disgrace, they felt a bubbling up of joy which overflowed whenever they met each other’s eyes. They really thought it was a gorgeous achievement to have smashed Major Littlejohn’s cannon, and everybody’s windows besides.

“Happy the man, and happy him alone,
He who can call to-day his own,
He who secure within himself can say,
‘To-morrow do thy worst ! but I have lived to-day.’”

To-morrow was likely to do its worst, for Teddy Goodlove was already throwing out dark

hints about how much they would have to pay. But Jem and Gay for a few hours waived the idea of financial ruin, exulting in the thought that they had been "in it." Major Littlejohn ought to be proud of losing his cannon in the service of his country. As for the glass, that was one of the drawbacks to living in a community. On Robinson Crusoe's island or the far-off Hebrides, where the boys would have preferred to live, one could celebrate without these difficulties and dangers. It was current news in the morning that every single pane of glass in the houses on Academy Hill were shattered. By noon, some regard for truth and accuracy had crept in, and the statement was that there had been three hundred and twelve cracked or broken. Jem and Gay tried to compute what it would cost to put in three hundred and twelve panes of glass. Gay said that glass cost a dollar a pane. Would that be three hundred and twelve dollars, or three dollars and twelve cents? They could n't decide, the niceties of the decimal point not having been mastered yet. By the time night approached, their consciences began to be disturbed. The future looked gloomy, and they were so dreadfully sleepy.

The church bells had been rung by the different sextons at noon, and they were rung again at six o'clock, — all in a tame and decorous way. Not so had sounded the chimes at midnight.

Towards five o'clock, Mr. Bevis and Truett, and Marcia and Tish, and Dorothy and Lucy, were busy on the terrace at the Clares', getting ready for the fireworks. Jem and Gay, being left out in the cold, were taken possession of by Peggy and Emily, who having each a bunch of fire-crackers, of which they wished to make the most possible, doled them out singly to the boys, with the order, —

“Now make that one go off.”

It was a small business, after blowing cannon to pieces; still, it was a relief to have anything to keep them awake. But how much more exciting to have been helping cousin Bevis, ordering Truett and the Clares' man around. What could girls possibly know about fireworks? Cousin Bevis's conversation, besides, seemed to be so amusing, for the girls laughed constantly. Only hints of the jokes came to the boys; it was so trying to have a blank just when the point of the story came.

“He gave me a —” said cousin Bevis,
“and I was so grateful and obliged I —”

"In your —!" all the girls chorused with laughter.

"And then," cousin Bevis pursued, "what do you think? The very next day — — —"

More laughter! Yes, that Fourth of July afternoon seemed very long and tiresome. It is very fine, of course, to blow cannon to pieces, and go on the rampage generally; but when the glory is faded, when one is tired, when one's heart is sad, when one's head aches, when one's eyes feel hot with tears, one does like to have one's sister to comfort one. Jem missed Tish and Gay missed Lucy. He had heard Lucy say to Marcia, —

"Gay used to be such a good boy," and he felt himself little better than one of the wicked.

As the sun went down, Carlo crept out of the shrubberies and sat down by Jem and Gay, and all three looked battered and bruised in flesh and spirit.

Quite a party of people gathered at the Clares' as tea-time approached, and Teddy Goodlove came and sat by the boys and told them what Major Littlejohn said about the cannon; for Teddy, having heard and trembled, was glad to have the chance to make Jem and Gay hear and tremble. The major had been in a rage. He

was like his own cannon, ill-tempered and heated hot in a moment. He had told Dr. Goodlove and others that he considered the stealing of his cannon a criminal affair, — indeed, a capital offense, and he wanted all the boys not only hanged, but drawn and quartered. The boys were discussing the legal aspect of the case, whether people were really drawn and quartered nowadays, whether anybody's heads could be put up on gate-posts as they used to be in the good old times, when Marcia and Dorothy came out and called them in to tea. Insensibly, as they ate salad and sandwiches Jem's and Gay's hearts lightened. It seemed impossible that Dr. Goodlove and Dr. Nicoll could be in such good spirits if their sons' heads were to be cut off to adorn the gate-posts. They were not, however, permitted to cheer up too much.

"Did you sleep well last night, boys?" cousin Bevis asked, as his eye fell on them.

"Not all the time," Jem answered.

"I could n't sleep," Mr. Bevis observed. "It seemed to me I heard a sound."

"Impossible," said Mr. Clare. "Quite impossible."

"Yes, it was a distinct sound," Mr. Bevis insisted.

"If it had been the night before Christmas, now," said Mr. Clare, "why then — But on the night before the Fourth of July, and in High Elms! You must have been dreaming."

"The question is," said Dr. Goodlove, "who is going to put his hand in his pocket and pay for all that glass? — not to say the major's swivel."

The skeleton in the boys' cupboard peeped out dismally at this moment.

"I wonder," said cousin Bevis, "if boys nowadays ever read the story about paying too dear for the whistle?"

However, when the feast was over, there was something to take their minds off their misdeeds. The ladies had chairs on the veranda. Marcia, Dorothy, Peggy, and Emily sat on the top step, and Tish, Jem, Gay, Lucy, and Teddy next below. In the west, where the sun had gone down, there was still a blending of warm colors. Here on the east side dusk had begun to gather. Emily caught sight of something in the sky. Was it a star? No, it was a point of light that moved, that changed color, now giving out a red, then a blue, then a yellow ray. It was a fire-balloon, Jem said.

"What is a fire-balloon?" demanded Emily.

"Please to explain." Then she wished to know where it came from and where it went to. That was the wonder, the charm of it! Who had sent up those lovely messengers, following each other in a procession, with their signals of crimson and azure, green and gold. The real stars had come out by this time, and shone in a superior, far-off sort of way, as if unwilling to match their eternal light against these twinklers whose glitter would so soon be snuffed out. The children all talked about balloons. Jem and Gay and Teddy meant to go up in a real balloon as soon as they were old enough to be allowed to go where they liked.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clare, Mr. Bevis, Dr. Nicoli, and Dr. Goodlove had been finishing up the preparations for the fireworks.

"Now, children," said Mr. Bevis, "we are going to have our own little day — blaze out then die in a burst of glory."

He and Dr. Goodlove were to set them off, and Mr. Clare and the rector sat down on a bench on the terrace.

Mr. Bevis let off three Roman candles, one after the other. It was a good beginning.

Dr. Goodlove followed with a magnificent wheel of rose-colored fire. All the children's

faces were lighted up by it. As for the far-off stars, they grew pale and dim.

More Roman candles, — a dozen in succession.

More wheels, — one crimson and one blue.

A perfect orgy of color.

Mr. Bevis next set to work at the rockets, which, exploding far up in the sky, dropped like a bouquet of the most wonderful flowers, carnations, chrysanthemums; of such wonderful gem-like hues, it seemed cruel to have them fade. One looked and longed, and longed and looked, and when the lovely lights went out, something within one seemed to go out, too.

More rose-colored fire, that changed into gold and blue and green. Some of the lights were unearthly, quite eerie.

More rockets, like falling flowers, like star showers, like the scattering of rubies, opals, sapphires, diamonds, amethysts, and emeralds. Emily was bewitched. Everybody was bewitched. By this time the sky was like a vault of dark blue. Every color showed, yet in the moment's interval between the blaze of the fireworks one had a feeling of the immeasurable space outside one's little circle. Not to have one show succeed the other instantly, made everybody impatient; yet now there seemed to be a long, long

pause. Dr. Goodlove was fumbling at one of the pieces.

"I can't make it go off," he was saying; and Mr. Bevis, although he had two Roman candles in each hand, turned to help the doctor.

"Poke it a little with your knife," he advised, peering into it.

The advice was not needed. The piece went off on the instant, bursting into Mr. Bevis's face, and lighting it up so that its anguish was visible to all.

There was a cry of pain, a prolonged howl. Everybody could see cousin Bevis dancing on one foot at the same moment that his Roman candles were "shooting madly from their spheres." Dr. Goodlove, too, was letting his rockets pop in any and every direction. He was terribly frightened lest he had put Mr. Bevis's eyes out; but the senseless fireworks had to be let off somehow before he could pause. Some of the rockets and Roman candles, aimed at random, were lost in the trees; others hit the fence; some wandered into the shrubberies; but the largest portion went straight into the porch of the house opposite, where the three Miss Bonners were sitting enjoying the display, and Miss Amelia, who was delicate, fainted dead away, then came to and went into hysterics.

Cousin Bevis was sure his eyes were put out ; then, when he could see, thought it must have been his eyelashes that were burned off ; when they seemed to be intact, he decided it was his eyebrows. Dr. Goodlove was making a careful examination of his various features when a messenger arrived from Miss Bonner, asking the doctor to come instantly, as somebody had been shooting fireworks at them, and Miss Amelia was seriously injured.

Not even Miss Amelia was damaged. Everybody was amused, everybody laughed, but everybody agreed that no more gunpowder should be burned at High Elms that year.

CHAPTER XI

DOROTHY'S WAIF AND STRAY

THE summer home for city children was now open and Miss Blake, who was its manager, was asked to bring the girls and boys to the rectory on the afternoon of the fifth of July. Tish's bazaar had made quite a good deal of money for the enterprise, and she and Marcia and Dorothy and Lucy were very anxious to see the poor little creatures out of the tenements and alleys of New York who had been sent to the country to enjoy pure air, sunshine, good food, and a chance to play. So forty children, mostly girls, were to be brought to the tea-party by Miss Blake and her assistant, Miss Gould. The tables which had done service for the bazaar were now to be loaded down with good things to eat. All the people in the neighborhood sent provisions, and from eleven o'clock in the morning until past one, baskets and hampers were constantly arriving at the rectory, containing loaves of bread, pats of butter, jars of jam,

boiled ham, and cakes of all sizes. Mrs. Clare, assisted by Marcia and Tish, made sandwiches; Dorothy, Lucy, and Peggy opened baskets; Jem and Gay ran on errands. It sometimes does seem as if the chief business of life is to give people three meals a day. The novelty and charm of this present undertaking was that these tables were being spread for those who had so far enjoyed small notion of what a square meal was.

"Just think, Emily," Dorothy said impressively, "how you would feel if you had n't any home and nowhere to sleep and no breakfast when you got up in the morning but what you could pick up in the street."

"I should go to cousin Bevis's," Emily replied with instant decision.

"But if there were not any cousin Bevis," said Dorothy, "then" —

"Then I should come to your house," Emily insisted.

Happy little girl, who could not take in the fact of poverty, of being homeless, friendless! She belonged to a world where plenty reigned, where tables were set, servants waited, and friends and relatives made a rampart against cold and hunger and suffering.

Before three o'clock everything was ready. Marcia, Tish, Dorothy, Lucy, Peggy, Emily, Jem, and Gay, besides Toby, Carlo, and Flossy, were all drawn up ready to receive the visitors. This was the "reception committee." Each of them, boy and girl alike, wore a white sailor suit trimmed with blue. I do not mean that the dogs actually belonged to the reception committee and wore sailor suits, but each dog had on a white and blue ribbon, and each felt and looked extremely important.

Just as the clock struck three Jem and Gay, detailed as skirmishers, came running back to report that Miss Blake was in sight at the head of a long procession. In order that the reception committee need not feel tongue-tied and at a loss, Mrs. Clare had instructed them to say to the visitors, —

"How do you do? I am so glad to see you. Aren't you very warm? Come over to the table and I will give you a glass of milk."

For over at one of the tables Mrs. Clare and Miss Bevis were ready to ladle out milk by the cupful.

It is sometimes a good thing to have cut-and-dried speeches. Marcia and Tish might have known what to say, but Dorothy and Lucy

could never have found a word, they were so dumfounded by the sight of such a long column of strangers. As it was, after one moment of bewilderment, Dorothy managed to falter, "How do you do? I am so glad to see you. Are you very warm? Come and I will give you a glass of milk."

Marcia and Tish had led the way, each with four girls. Dorothy and Lucy followed. Marcia's girls were the tallest, and were gaunt and wild-eyed; Tish's were a little smaller, and Dorothy's and Lucy's were little things from six to eight years of age. All the children were dressed in black sailor hats, blue gingham frocks, and white pinafores (Miss Bevis and Mrs. Clare had made dozens of both frocks and pinafores). All had their hair cropped close to their heads. A few of the smallest had round, good-humored faces, but the greater part of them were white and timid, and although they might look bright and knowing, had sharp, peaked features. Each one was ready for the glass of milk and a sandwich. There is a saying, "You should butter a cat's paws on bringing her to a strange house;" and the glass of milk and the sandwich was a sort of buttering of the paws, for by the time they were swallowed a little of the shyness and

wildness were gone out of the staring eyes. Not one of the children had much idea of what was expected of them in this new and strange experience, but they all knew how to eat, had had generally too little chance to eat, and found a comfort in it. To not a few of the forty children the only idea of joy they had was of having enough to eat.

In half an hour everything was going on nicely. Dr. Nicoll had spoken to the children; Miss Blake and Miss Gould had sat down with the ladies under the willow-trees, and the reception committee began to think of amusing the little guests. There was a croquet set laid out; there was a swing, and balls to play with. Jem and Gay were ready to run the excursion train to London, Rome, Paris, and the Desert of Sahara. To put each one at the game most likely to interest her was the important thing. Marcia had always had a knack of setting others to work joyfully, and her centurion habit of command came in well now as she said, "Do this," or "Do that."

Everybody likes marching to order when they love the order. The languid little ones were set to watch Jem and Gay. Those who had more enterprise were initiated by Peggy and Lucy in

the game of ninepins. Half a dozen were taken to the swing by Tish. A croquet party was to be made up.

"Dorothy," said Marcia, "go and ask that tall, thin, dark girl to come and play. She's the brightest one here."

Dorothy, glad to have her task set for her, ran to obey. She had noticed this particular girl before, for a sort of radiance in her air was in singular contrast to the dull apathy of so many of the others. This one smiled constantly and looked about with eagerness. Dorothy ran across the grass-plot and said in her soft coaxing way, —

"Should you like to play croquet? I can teach you the game if you do not know it."

The girl's eyes had been fixed on the tree-tops resting against the sky. As Dorothy's voice struck her ear she turned sharply. The two were face to face and their glances met with an instantaneous flash.

"Oh, lor'!" said the girl, "if it ain't her."

"Oh, Jinny! Is it you, Jinny?"

These exclamations uttered, they stood silent for a long moment, simply gazing breathlessly. The grounds were so full of people they were not observed. For a moment Dorothy felt like

crying out, like calling to her mother, to Tish, to Marcia, that this was Jinny, the wicked girl she had met in New York who had run off with her silver quarter of a dollar. But that was before she thought, before she really felt. What moved Dorothy was that Jinny's face as she had seen it uplifted to the sky with a queer glittering smile of lips and eyes full of surprise and joy, had suddenly changed. Now what Dorothy caught in the girl's glance was a suggestion of a friendless dog, the capacity for infinite gratitude along with the dread that nothing but blows and kicks are to be expected.

Dorothy put out her hand. "Oh, Jinny," she said, "I'm so glad you've come. I always wanted to see you again."

Jinny stared without taking the hand.

"Oh no, not really?" she said in a queer choked little voice.

"Yes, I have," Dorothy insisted. "I've kept thinking about you."

Jinny plucked at Dorothy's sleeve. "If you tell on me," she faltered, "I'm afraid they'll send me off. They don't want bad uns."

At this moment Marcia came up.

"Why, what's the matter?" she demanded in surprise, seeing there were tears in Dorothy's

eyes and that the girl's face was flushed and troubled.

"Marcia," said Dorothy, "it's Jinny. Don't you know I was telling you about the girl I saw in New York that day? It's Jinny."

Jinny drew a hard, deep breath. A hunted look came into her face. Marcia was confounded for a moment, then she reached out both hands and drew the little thin claw-like fingers into her own.

"How strange it should happen so," she exclaimed. "Why, Jinny! It's just what we wanted — to have you come."

Jinny gazed up at the beautiful clear face with its dark eyes and lovely lips.

"Don't tell on me," she whispered, "I'm afraid they'll send me off."

"You know you did wrong," said Marcia. "If you are sorry you did wrong, if you confess that you did wrong, if you promise not to do wrong any more, — why then, — we will all love you and help you."

A queer little gleam of something not unlike fun crossed the sharp little face.

"She was such a hinnercent," said Jinny. "But I did feel ashamed when she said she was going to give me half."

"I would have given you the whole, Jinny," Dorothy burst out; "I would have done a great deal more for you than that, Jinny! Oh, Jinny, say you're sorry. I'm all ready to forgive you. I want to forgive you. Say you're sorry. I do want to feel that you are good, that I can love you."

Jinny was not used to confession, to repentance, to promises of being a better girl. Still, as Dorothy appealed to her something seemed to clutch at her heart. To cry was to her mind something quite degrading, suggesting weakness and giving up and being trodden on. Thus when tears came she shook them off, puckering up her face in the queerest way. But Dorothy and Marcia saw those tears.

"You are sorry, Jinny," said Marcia. "You will never do such things any more, will you?"

"No, no, no," cried Jinny, in the grasp of a power she hardly knew; a power that seemed to be drawing her heart out of her body. Then to have both girls kiss her!

It was just at this moment that Mrs. Clare, who had happened to catch a glimpse of Dorothy, came up with Mr. Bevis. Nothing could well be more surprising than the fact that Dorothy's encounter with Jinny in New York should

have had this sequel, and yet, when one came to think of it, nothing could be more natural. Mrs. Clare and Mr. Bevis and Dr. Nicoll drew out Jinny's whole story.

"Have you a mother?" Mrs. Clare asked.

"No, ma'am, I lost my mother," was the reply.

"And your father?"

"I lost my father too."

"You must have been a very careless girl to lose both your father and your mother," Mr. Bevis observed, shaking his head.

Jinny first stared, then her black eyes snapped with fun. She had lived with Maggy Hard, she went on to relate. She was n't related to Maggy that she ever heard of. She had given Maggy all the money she could get by begging, selling papers, or running errands. Had she given Maggy Dorothy's twenty-five cents? Mr. Bevis asked. Jinny's eyes snapped again, this time with wrath. She had only got five cents' worth out of it, when it was stole from her by Danny McCoy, the bad, faithless creature! Well, to go back to Maggy. Maggy's husband did n't do any work, but was mixed up somehow with the politicians. Neither he nor Maggy had been good to Jinny. She had

been used to kicks, beatings, and hard times generally. Then this spring, about two weeks after she had seen Dorothy, she had been run over in a crowded street, and as it happened one of the ladies from the Settlement who knew her had seen the accident happen, had visited her while she was laid up at the hospital, and had looked after her since she came out. For when she went back to Maggy's, Maggy had moved away, had moved in the night, and not a soul knew where she had gone. Miss Gould corroborated all this, and told Mrs. Clare and Mr. Bevis that the ladies at the Settlement had been much interested in Jinny and had made an effort to have her taken in at the Summer Home. In fact, everybody was interested in the child, with her little pinched white face, her big mouth with its scarlet lips which, generally open, showed sharp white teeth; her long dark eyes so full of glitter and expression.

Just what had happened between Dorothy and Jinny on that long ago day in March was to be kept a secret between the Bevises, Clares, and Nicolls. All should be forgiven and forgotten. Jinny should have a chance.

It was with a queer swelling of the heart that Jinny heard the joyful news that she was to go

and play, and Dorothy, taking the thin little hand in her round plump one, drew her away to the arbor. Really, as Dorothy and Tish said to each other, the most surprising things did happen. They had talked so much about Jinny; had had so many ideas of what they wished to do for Jinny. Here was their chance.

Jinny entered into the games with wonderful quickness of apprehension, and was most helpful in entertaining the thirty-nine others, all of whom were to be amused, fed, and sent away happy. She was curiously different from most of them. Everything interested Jinny. Nothing escaped her. Dorothy and Dorothy's mates were something to look at, to watch, to wonder over. Little Emily was to her something to worship; and Emily accepted Jinny's spaniel-like devotion and, as she said, "took her round and showed her things." Jinny floated rather than walked. She gazed, she listened, her eye could not be satisfied with seeing nor her ear with hearing.

It was settled that she was to come frequently and spend the day at the rectory or the Clares'. They wanted to make her enjoy everything with them.

CHAPTER XII

THE ISLAND

"I'M skipper of this boat," said Captain Narraway, "and let it be distinctly understood that anybody who does n't obey orders goes over-board."

There was a severe note in the captain's voice as he said this that made the children feel that he was to be obeyed. But there was also a twinkle in the captain's eye which made them feel it would always be a joy to obey him. They had stood waiting on the floating dock while he was getting the boat to rights and hoisting the sail; then he had called them one by one and placed each one just where he wished him or her to sit. Jinny was at his left hand. Marcia he knew well; Gay and Lucy had been twice on his boat before, but this queer starved-looking stranger, although he had seen her before, was an unknown quantity. He liked to study her.

"Mind," he said to Jinny, "that you don't

move a single inch without asking my permission," and with no little awe of the captain, Jinny gasped that she wouldn't move, she wouldn't even speak out loud.

Next to Jinny was Tish; then Peggy, then Lucy, then Gay. On the other side were Marcia, Dorothy, and Jem, also Carlo, Toby, and Flossy. Toby did n't like it. Flossy did n't like it much, but Carlo, — Carlo liked to feel he was doing what other people did. He had been out on the water before. It was not Carlo's way to take invitations for granted. So to-day all the dogs had been asked.

Off they started. The captain let go the sail, which first shivered, then flapped and expanded with joyous movement as it caught the breeze.

"Yes," said the captain, as he stood with the tiller between his legs, holding the sheet in his hand and getting ready to tack ship; "the first thing for each and every one of you to do is to obey orders. Down heads!"

Down went the heads and over crashed the boom. "Then," the captain pursued as, the course of the boat changed, away they went down the harbor with deep, steady lurches, the bowsprit dipping and burying itself in foam

that, gathering high at the bow, went hissing along the sides, and forming a long wake of bubble and spray behind; "then the second thing to do is to obey orders. The third thing, also, is to obey orders. Finally, when you've really learned that orders are to be obeyed if you die for it, there is some chance of your being good for something in this world, and being skipper yourself when the time comes. But the boy who begins by thinking he is skipper never amounts to shucks."

"That is what is the matter with me," said Marcia to Dorothy. "I began by thinking I was skipper."

"What's that?" demanded the captain, for he had the quickest ear in the world. "What's that you say?"

"I only meant," Marcia explained, "that in old Swallowfield days I used to make Dorothy, Lucy, and Gay mind me."

"You led them many a dance, I'll be bound," said the captain.

"We did n't blow up cannon or smash windows," said Marcia.

Lucy shook her head and glanced at Gay, who colored up and exchanged a look with Jem. The captain went on to say there was mischief

and mischief. When he knew what sort of mischief a boy or girl liked, why then he knew what that boy or girl was. He gave a glance at Jinny that made Dorothy feel hot all over, but Jinny was sitting with her mouth wide open, smiling, seeming to drink in the wind, her long eyes almost shut, but with a glitter between the lids. The captain had scolded Jem and Gay for their doings at the Fourth of July celebration; but in his heart he was not inclined to be severe on the boys. Perhaps if Harry West had crammed a little less powder into that ramshackle old cannon, the results might have been a little less expensive. As for the instinct which led Harry into putting twice too much powder into the charge, that the captain could sympathize with. When Fourth of July came, what a boy felt was, that he wanted to do twice too much of everything. It was the nation's birthday.

“Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
This is my own, my native land?”

Captain Narraway was not that man. And this overflow of patriotic feeling in the boys, he considered, ought to be forgiven, like earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones, and other spon-

taneous outbursts. Indeed, a good deal had been forgiven the boys by this time. Even Major Littlejohn's fury, beginning as it had at the zenith, had gradually declined. "Boys will be boys, and we want them to be boys," was an acceptable formula for the fathers who had been boys themselves in their day. Mrs. Littlejohn had been heard to say that, for her own part, she was overjoyed to be rid of the cannon; that it had gloomed over that part of the grounds and made her hate it; and now it was gone she was going to have a garden-party. Yes, it began to seem as if the affair of the cannon might be glossed over. But the window-panes were a different matter altogether. A person could live without a cannon comfortably, but not with all the glass in their windows shattered. That bill for three hundred odd panes was to be settled, and by the boys; that is, the fathers of the eleven boys (Gay was a stranger to High Elms and had been led into evil courses by Jem) who had "celebrated" had decided that their sons' pocket-money was to go into the hands of a "receiver" until the amount was made up. Gay felt a good deal ashamed of his position, still it did seem a piece of good fortune that his pocket-money was not to be handed in. The

fact was, he never did have any pocket-money. Lucy was the purse-holder, and to get even a matter of five cents out of Lucy some degree of ingenuity was required. Jem and Gay indeed had a good deal on their minds in these days, their money affairs were so queerly mixed up. They each owed something to the other, and they both owed Harry West—or at least he said so—for the powder and tar barrels. To-day, however, black care did not sit so heavily on the boys' shoulders but that they could give themselves up to the enjoyment before them. The captain had promised Marcia a "clam-bake," and the clam-bake was to round off the present excursion. Money troubles seemed far off as they heard the bubbling rush of the water while they flew along, for the tide was running out and the east wind was in their favor. Lucy was a little timid and held Peggy's hand. Marcia loved the sea; she liked to feel the power of the elements, and rejoiced in the thought of meeting big waves and feeling the stinging salt spray as they broke over her. Jinny had never been in a boat before; but nothing terrified Jinny, and this swift rush through the blue waters was only one of the many new and delightful sensations of this strange experience.

“Of course,” said Captain Narraway, “being on the water is the most nat’ral experience in the world. The love of it’s born in you, and you’re homesick for it till you have it. Nobody takes to the land in the same way they take to the water. To begin with, on shore there’s no air to breathe. You’re so shut in by houses and trees there’s no proper sky. If you want to go anywhere on land, you’ve got to walk on your two legs or else make a horse walk on his four legs. Or if you take the cars, or any other kind of invention, it’s more than your life is worth, — you know you’ve only one chance in about a hundred of living to get to the end of your journey, — and what comfort is there in that? The dry land never does anything for you. But just get into a boat, and the water takes care of you as a mother takes care of a child. It rocks you, it carries you on; it gives you good fresh air to take into your lungs and breathe. There’s no sort of comparison between land and water for coming easy and nat’ral like. I never saw much use in such a waste of dry land myself.”

Lucy looked as if she thought dry land had its uses, and could be a comfort. But they all let the captain have his say. Although any-

thing that moved on the face of the waters had God's spirit in it, as it were, some kinds of craft were better than others. For his part he thought little of steam. It was one of those modern inventions, born of a land lubber's brain, that had resulted in a good deal of mischief. He himself wished that there was no such thing as steam.

"Would n't you have even a tea-kettle?" Marcia demanded.

The captain's eye twinkled. "Not even a tea-kettle," he insisted. Steam did nobody any good. He owned that a man got out of patience when he whistled for the wind and the wind did n't come. There was a certain convenience in having a boat with all the winds of heaven in her boilers; but a man did n't get to heaven by having the winds blow just the way he wanted. Patient waiting and some anguish of the spirit in battling with adverse winds is good for him.

What settled the question was, that there was not one word about steam in the Bible, whereas everywhere there is shown an excellent knowledge of sailing craft. What does Isaiah say when he wishes to describe the weakness of men? "Their tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast; they could not spread the sail."

Now, if that was not written by a sailor it was written by a sailor-minded man.

"I like sails best," said Dorothy, nodding at Captain Narraway. "They are like wings."

They had reached the harbor's mouth, and felt the swell of the Sound. Long Island, bathed in mist, looked like a cloud in the horizon, and seemed very far off. Little soft white clouds, which had the very spirit of the soft summer wind in their fleeces, moved gently across the sky. The wide waters made a mirror for the blue and white above.

"Children!" called the captain, "do you see, right in the midst of the blue sea, a bit of yellow-green?"

Yes, they saw it.

"Keep your eyes on that spot," said the captain. "Before we have our clam-bake you'll see more of it."

But there were so many different things to take up their minds. They had run so far out into the Sound they could see the white, curving lines of Half Moon Beach. Accordingly, all the story of their going after a boat-load of sand had to be told by Dorothy, Tish, Jem, and Peggy, to Marcia, Jinny, Lucy, and Gay. A school of whitefish, glittering like the meshes of

a silver net, passed so near them that it seemed as if they might have put out their hands and picked up handfuls of the little shining creatures. The enemy was after them. A flock of gulls dipped, screaming, and came up with something in their beaks that flashed in the sun. Dorothy did not like to think what it was. However, the fish were after their own breakfast, and the gulls as well wanted their breakfast. What were those big, black, shining creatures, that appeared ahead rolling over and over, showing a head like a pig's? "Nothing but porpoises," Captain Narraway explained; but porpoises were very exciting to the children. They watched and watched for them to come up again, expecting to see them in the same place.

"There they are!" cried Jinny, pointing to the other side of the boat; and there they were, indeed, heaving slowly out of the waves, their wet, slippery sides taking on different colors in the sun; then, keeling over, down they went into the depths, vanishing for good this time. At least, the children saw them no more.

"Now look at what I told you to keep in sight," the captain called, pointing over his shoulder. Wonderful to relate; where before there had been only a waste of water, deep blue,

with that line of shining green, now showed a little white island, which had appeared as if by magic.

“Where did it come from?” demanded Marcia.

“Better ask where the water has gone to,” answered the captain. “At flood tide that bar is four feet under water.”

How surprising it all was! One couldn't get one set of whys and wherefores answered before something else still more strange and marvelous came up with a fresh interrogation point. To Jinny it was no more to be wondered at if an island suddenly appeared out of the deep sea than that she should be here in a boat enjoying the children's good times. Everything was a surprise and a joy, as she drank in the cool breeze, listened to the sound of the water as the prow cut through it, the gurgles and murmurs beneath the boat, and the whistling of the sail. Even the little union jack at the masthead sang in the wind as it blew.

“Now then, *heads down*,” called the captain. This was a needless precaution, for the boom was well above the tallest of them all. But it was a safe order, and down went the heads. The sail shook; the boat quivered, seemed to

lose its way, then over went the boom, out filled the canvas. Up came the heads. The boat was tearing through the water now. Where were they? In the twinkling of an eye all had changed. Instead of the gently heaving Sound on every side, with its hazy, far-away shores, they were sailing through a rippling, glittering, sun-shiny sea, towards a white beach which seemed to grow whiter and higher every moment.

“Now children,” said Captain Narraway, “you have all heard of Shakespeare.” Jinny stared, but the others all knew something about Shakespeare.

“There’s a line in some of his books,” observed the captain with some little pride in his ability to quote the poets, “I don’t know exactly where it is to be found, only I’ll answer for its being there,—about there being a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Now I just want to say that for our fortunes to-day we need the ebb.”

The captain enjoyed his own little joke, even if the children, except perhaps the clever Tish, did not quite get the point. They would find out presently what he meant. “Now then,” the captain continued, “off with your shoes and stockings, every one of you.”

Not even Marcia thought twice about this order. Off went the shoes and stockings.

By this time they had approached very near to this wonderful little island risen, like Venus, out of the foam of the sea.

“That’s where the clams for our clam-bake are coming from,” observed the captain. “Marcia, did you ever hear the saying, ‘Happy as a clam at high water?’ You’ll understand it henceforth.”

At this moment the boat grounded on the sand.

“Out with you, boys,” sang the captain. “Pull her up high and dry.”

High and dry it was. Out scrambled Jem and Gay and tugged manfully. The dogs jumped after the boys. In another minute the girls could follow, and before the anchor was made fast the little white feet were twinkling all over the island. Oh, what fun! Even Toby, although he generally did not condescend to like things, liked this amazingly. Flossy pranced about. As for Carlo,—he seemed to think he was Christopher Columbus himself and had discovered a new world. It was just a mere strip of sand and shells; the waters lapping it unceasingly were receding all the time, leaving

more and more of the smooth shelving sea-bottom disclosed. The children could wade in knee-deep. The sand was so fine and soft it was a pleasure to feel the tips of one's toes sink in it.

"How do you like it, Jinny?" Dorothy asked, as the two waded in together.

"Oh, I just love it!" Jinny replied fervently. "I never knowed before there was such beautiful times in the world."

"You didn't say much in the boat."

"He told me," Jinny pointed towards Captain Narraway, "that I was n't to stir. He said he'd throw me overboard if I didn't mind. I kept talking to myself," she added with her saucy smile and glittering eye.

"We always do mind cap'n. We love to mind cap'n," said Dorothy.

"I don't love to mind anybody," Jinny declared, dancing up and down in the water and splashing herself and Dorothy. Then, penitent, she went closer up to Dorothy with that spaniel-like look in her face which they all knew by this time.

"I'll mind you," she said. "I don't never get over your being so good to me."

"I want you to be good," said Dorothy. "I

love you dearly, Jinny. I do want you to be real good."

Real goodness was something Jinny did not quite take in the idea of. She was so used to feeling that there was not enough to go round; that if she had anything it came by virtue of trampling on somebody to snatch at it and making off with it, or to being trampled on and robbed of her share, then perhaps being kicked and cuffed and punished for being trampled on and robbed. No, that there should be enough of what she wanted for herself and for everybody and to spare; that was as much beyond her imagination as it was beyond her experience. Here was no need of grabbing, but the habit of grabbing was in her. She could see that everybody meant to give her a chance, that everybody was polite and kind. It was the most puzzling thing to her how the children could be always so polite and kind. She could have understood it better if they had thrust her aside; robbed her of her share of the sunshine.

Captain Narraway had planted his anchor deep in the sand, and now brought out a basket and a couple of picks from the hold.

"Here, Marcia," he called. "Do you want to help me?"

Everybody envied Marcia. There she was, equipped with a nice little hoe to dig in the sand.

The captain led the way to the very edge of the water where the sand was still wet.

“Do you see the air-holes?” he inquired.

They had not observed before that the sand was full of little holes.

“There’s at least one clam under every hole,” said the captain. Nobody but Marcia would have been brave enough to set to work on the instant, digging as if for dear life. Under the sand lay the clams so thick that it was no work at all to fill the basket. They were such nice, white, clean-looking clams, it was a pleasure to pick them up. The water going down more and more, they could follow out the sand farther and farther every moment. Jem and Gay set to work to dig with the empty shells they found in the sand. Carlo followed suit with his paws, and when he had uncovered a clam was the most astonished dog in the world, and when the clam squirted its juice into his eyes, — why, you should have seen Carlo and Toby and Flossy look at the thing, turn it over with their paws, sniff at it, and bark at it.

Jinny was quite carried away with the idea of finding the clams under their feet.

"Can anybody dig here that wants to?" she asked the captain.

"Sartin sure."

"And clams are good to eat?"

"We shall all find out presently that they are as good eating as anybody needs."

"And you don't have to pay for them?"

"God Almighty don't treat us so bad as to make us pay for what comes out of the sea," said the captain. "'The sea and all that in them is,' it's for us."

Jinny drew a deep breath. "Oh," she cried, "why don't all the poor people come here and live?"

"Plenty of poor people get their living out of the sea," said the captain.

"May I dig, — just one?" she asked humbly. The captain gave her his own pick.

"Dig as many as you want."

Jinny's eyes glittered; her whole face shone. At first she handled the pick rather timidly, as if afraid of frightening the clams. Then, as one opened its shell to look at her and unlocked its juices, she went at the task with a vengeance.

"Oh, you raskill, you varmint," she cried, "I'll get even with you." She talked to each one that she picked up; she screamed with laughter.

"Now I marvel how the fishes live in the sea," Shakespeare makes the fisherman say. All the children felt that this was really getting at the mystery of things. These clams must indeed be happy at high water when nobody could get at them. But it was so sensible for them to make air-holes at low water to show people just where they were.

"I should like to have cousin Bevis come and see them," Dorothy remarked. "It is just like digging a hill of potatoes."

Jem and Gay were proud of their own pile of clams. The two boys were always fond of discussing what trade or profession they would prefer to follow. At this moment they decided that a fisherman's life was the best worth having. Lucy and Peggy said they would keep house and Jem and Gay could supply them with fish.

The captain had shipped the clams and now called, "All aboard!" When the captain had eight children under his charge he kept one eye on them and the other on the horizon. The tide was just about to turn. In another five minutes girls and boys and dogs were once more putting out to sea.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLAM-BAKE

"THAT'S where I should like to live always," said Jinny, looking back wistfully at the island as they sailed away.

"Only at low tide," answered the captain. "It's only the clams that are happy at high water."

To Jinny the ebb and flow of the tide was a sort of chance thing, like the blowing of the wind.

"I never expected to see anything like that," she went on, her tongue loosened by this surprising experience, — "the clams just lying there free for anybody to come and dig them."

Captain Narraway had not taken to Jinny at first. He was always ready to do all he could for the children at the Summer Home, but he did not quite like to have Jinny along with Dorothy and the rest. "The chick that comes of a hen must scrape," he would often say of the poor and unlucky. But Jinny's astonish-

ment in the fact that anything to eat could be free somehow touched him. Here were seven other children to each of whom had come every day of their lives, food, drink, fire, and clothing, without a thought. Marcia had known some of the cares and anxieties of poverty, but not such poverty as Jinny's.

"She's a cute little critter," the captain remarked to Marcia confidentially, and they set to work to draw her out; to make her tell the story of her life. There was not much to tell, except of always dreading something, always running away from something. Now and then Davy Burns, who sold papers, had let her help him, and once she had made eleven cents in the morning and eight in the evening.

"Nineteen cents," said Marcia. "What did you do with all that money?"

"You bet I got something to eat."

"What did you get?"

"A beefsteak pie and fried potatoes."

"Were they good?"

"Just grand!"

"Did you always have as good meals as that?"

"Oh, always," said Jinny, her whole face shining with fun. "Roast beef and potatoes

roasted in the gravy three times a day, and bread and butter and jam between meals! Well, never not just!"

"Did you ever go hungry?"

"Hungry?" It was curious to see the glitter in the long dark eyes, and the twist in her thin lips. She opened them to say more, then snapped them and kept silence, half ashamed to confess that she had been hungry; finally she burst out with energy:—

"I've allus been hungry ever since I was borned!"

"I've been hungry myself and it never did me any harm," said the captain. "A little hunger is n't a bad thing. The worst luck in this world is to have too much to eat."

All this time they had been running up the Sound, but now, after tacking ship, were making for a certain little bend in the great sandy tongue of land which ran down from Stillford, giving one side to the harbor's mouth and the other to the Sound. Here the captain soon landed his passengers in a little cove. The boat was dragged up to the highest water-mark. Then the clams were carried to a deep sand-bank which the captain knew, and the children were directed to gather all the chips and sticks

they could find. While they raced up and down the beach, Captain Narraway dug a long trench which he first paved with pebbles and shells, then planted the clams in rows, and finally covered all up with a layer of sand. On top of this he made a great pile of the drift-wood the children had gathered and lighted a rousing fire.

"Now," he said, "while the clams are baking you shall all have a bath."

Nobody but Captain Narraway could have contrived it all, but he had managed it beautifully. He had arranged with Mrs. Brown (who kept the Seaside House half a mile up Stillford Beach) to have bathing suits ready for the children, and here they were, laid out in the bath-houses close at hand. The girls understood now why, when they had spoken of putting on their shoes and stockings again, the captain had said, "Not quite yet."

In five minutes out came the whole party ready to run down the beautiful shelving beach into the waters that had gone so far out it seemed as if they could never come back. It was just the place to wade and duck and tumble down and let the waves only a few inches deep roll over you; to scramble up and shake off the

water like a duck and race through it. Carlo and Flossy waded and swam and splashed, as well as the girls and boys. Toby looked a little disgusted. He hated to be wet. He objected to seeing Dorothy tumbling about in the water, and would run to her and lead the way safely back to the dry sand, hoping that she would follow him.

There could be no danger, and yet there was enough force in the rollers to make them feel that they were on the edge of the deep sea. The captain, never losing one of the children out of his sight for an instant, watched until he saw a darker line in the water, and knowing that the incoming tide was bringing stronger waves, called :—

“Now then, all take hold of each other’s hands.”

The children, joining hands, made a long line. They, too, saw the wave coming; it looked so gentle; it seemed to be in no haste. They were in a hurry to meet it, so they all ran out to reach it. The next minute they were all knocked over, and lay laughing and shrieking and struggling, until the roller, after striking its blow, ran back, then came up afresh and washed them all over with its foam.

Up they jumped.

"It's l-l-like Pharaoh and his host," said Gay.

Like Pharaoh and his host, except that this happy band of children rose up stronger than ever and ran down to greet the new wave. The tide was now running up very fast and the surf was gaining volume. The children, growing bolder and bolder, liked each onslaught of the waves to be rougher. It was only about the seventh wave that gathered strength enough to please them. They, too, learned how to watch for it, from far off its coming was clear. They stood where the shallow water flowed round their feet, and looked across the intervening space, which took on the tones of mother-of-pearl, out to that darker line which scarcely broke the smoothness of the surface, yet was always getting a little higher and a little higher.

"Come on, we're getting ready for you," Jem would shout.

"I wish you could grow ten feet tall," Marcia would cry to the advancing wave.

They longed for its coolness; they longed for the tussle it would give them; they wanted to be lifted off their feet. When it came, Marcia and Tish met it face to face, ducking a little in

order to enjoy its full force ; Jinny jumped up and down and wriggled in it like a fish ; Dorothy and Lucy and Peggy shut their eyes and their mouths very tight and took it sidewise ; Jem and Gay dived into it. Luckily, it was not ten feet high. The captain knew all about the waves on this beach, even when the tide was coming in before the east wind.

“Time’s up,” shouted the captain. “Go and get dressed for dinner.”

Out they came. No dilly-dallying ; no putting off ; no saying, “Oh, please, just one dip more,” when Captain Narraway was in command. Carlo and Flossy emerged, dripping, and shook their coats as dry as they could, and then rolled in the sand. Toby was glad to see everybody come out of that damp, unpleasant water. How the children dripped, how their hair clung to their faces ! It did really seem as if they never could be dry again. Away they scudded towards the bath-houses.

And all this time (which, after all, was not so very long) the clams had been baking. The fire had blazed up, burned itself out, then had died down into glowing embers, which in their turn had faded and left nothing but ashes. Underneath the hot embers and ashes and sand

the clams had been roasting slowly, deliciously, each sizzling in its own juice. Each was ready to be eaten. By the time the children had trooped out all dressed, with even their shoes and stockings on once more, the captain had smoothed off a sand-bank and prepared a sort of table. He had made eight places, given each six roast clams, to say nothing of a pile of bread and butter. Oh, what a feast it was to look at! The idea of eating all those clams! To say nothing of all the bread and butter! Of course, one was furiously hungry, quite raging! But six clams! And how did one go to work to eat them?

It was Jem who understood and who now made a demonstration of how to tackle a roast clam. He cleverly twisted off the top shell, drank the juice, seized the clam by its black head and, holding it, bit off the rest and swallowed it, throwing the head away. Carlo caught it before it fell; Carlo, too, seemed past-master of the art of eating all the roast clams he could get hold of.

The other children at once followed Jem's suit. Dorothy shut her eyes, Lucy shuddered a little, Tish and Peggy looked for an instant as if, — but then! It was only the first step

that counted. Having eaten one clam, the second was easily managed. Nothing ever was so delicious, nor so easy to eat. The flavor was somehow so exactly right, and the mingling of food and drink somehow so peculiarly nourishing. And to sit on the sand with the wide Sound stretching out before them, with its far, beautiful reaches; its sails dotting the blue; its waves coming in, and its breezes fanning them. That helped to make it perfect. After the second clam the pile still seemed of good size, but after the fourth it diminished frightfully. When the sixth was gone, one felt somehow as if a painful void existed, as if not even an extra piece of bread and butter could fill it up.

Captain Narraway understood it all. He was n't in a hurry; he waited till he saw Jem and Gay take up the shells of the clams they had devoured, look at them wistfully, and — lick them to get the last drop of the juice. Jinny, nothing loath, did the same. The other girls, of course, being so well brought up, could n't have done such a thing; but, — still, one may go over one's pile of shells to make sure that one has not missed part of one's meal. Then came the question, —

“Ready for more clams?”

Ready for more clams! I rather think they were.

"I thought I'd give you each six for a taste," said the captain, "to make sure they were done right."

What good spirits they were all in on the instant! They were so hungry.

"I did n't like to say it," said Marcia, "but I was ready to cry when I came to the last. It seemed like being left friendless."

I should n't like to tell how many clams Captain Narraway had in reserve for the children. When one is at home reading a book, one looks down on eating. It seems at such times a pity that elegant and refined and intellectual beings should ever require food at all, except something delicate, exquisite, like a biscuit glacé or truffled anchovies. They, of course, should be served on exquisite damask, with glass and silver, with neat-footed servants in attendance. These eight children, enjoying Captain Narraway's clam-bake, having drunk in the sea-breeze for four hours, felt the salt spray, talked, laughed, shouted, used each of their five senses to its fullest, and finally had a tussle with the briny waves, — were so hungry that what they had wanted to say to their dinner was, "Stand not

upon the order of your coming, but come quickly and — bountifully.”

So we will let them eat all the clams the captain has provided, for *he* knew that the sea air brings a keen appetite. He could keep the secret, and so could I. Yet certain secrets will out; and if any of you had happened to go past that picnicking place, the story must have been told. For when the meal was over, Gay, happening to look round, pointed his finger at the pile of shells.

“It’s like a k-k-kitchen midden,” he exclaimed.

“What’s a kitchen midden? Please to explain,” demanded Marcia, quoting little Emily.

Tish, knowing that k-k-kitchen was a hard word for Gay to get past, herself explained that all over the world are to be found mounds of shells, ten feet high and hundreds of feet long, the remains of the clam-bakes, etc., of the early peoples who had eaten their meals and flung down the refuse just as the children had to-day; although, very possibly, not knowing how to make fires, they had eaten everything raw. Tish and Gay helped each other to describe how these kitchen middens (by which Danish name they had come to be called, because some of the

largest were found in Denmark) contained not only the shells, but little odds and ends of things, weapons and utensils of various sorts, which showed a great deal about the habits and customs of those primitive people. Stone knives, hatchets, spears, came out of the mounds. On some of the shells and bones were rude carvings and pictures; for, odd to relate, the people who lived in the early ages seemed to have a knack of doing things which last longer than anything we clever moderns can manage to do. Now, at Marcia's suggestion, each of the children scratched his or her name on a shell, in order that if this particular "midden" became "a foot-print on the sands of time," some tidings of this clam-bake might go down to future generations. All but Jinny; she could not scratch her name because she could neither write nor print. She could read a little, particularly in capital letters, having learned by the headlines in the newspapers. Not being able to write her name, she drew, with the sharp edge of a shell, a very pretty and correct outline of a boat, with a sail set in a way that even the captain declared was shipshape.

"I tell you, she's a cute little critter," he whispered to Marcia.

Jinny was at any rate an odd little creature. Presently, when she and Peggy and Lucy strolled up the beach, the others talked about her. She had said to Dorothy that morning, —

“I did n’t know till I’ve been here where the sun came from nor where it went to. In the city it comes up and goes down behind the houses, and I s’posed it lived in a house like other folks.”

“But the sun is n’t like people,” Dorothy had said; and Jinny had asked, —

“What is the sun, anyhow?”

She asked so many questions that one knew not how to answer. She had seen flowers and trees in the city parks, and knew that they came with summer. Grass was, to her mind, something from which one must keep off. It would not stay where children played. She had never known before that cherries grew on trees. Once she had bought a basket for five cents; most of them were spoiled, but there were eight that were quite delicious. One day at the Bevises’, Jinny was with them when they had red raspberries and cream, and they saw her stop eating hers and pinch herself violently. When asked what she was doing, she said, —

“I just wanted to make sure it was me having such good times.”

Nevertheless, along with Jinny's lack of understanding of things the idea of which the other children had taken in with the air they breathed, she yet could do many things beyond them, for example, the drawing of this boat. Not even Marcia could have done it with so free and accurate a stroke.

"How did you learn to draw, Jinny?" she asked.

Jinny did not know it was drawing. She had always liked to make pictures, she said. Then she had a quick, musical ear, and a sweet, clear voice. She had picked up the tunes she had heard, and sometimes the words. Then, too, the ladies at the settlement had taught her little songs and hymns.

"She's a cute little critter," the captain said again. "I wonder what she'll come to."

And then it was time to go home.

CHAPTER XIV

CONSEQUENCES

THE clam-bake had been great fun, but when Jem and Gay awoke next day there was still the unsolved problem of how they were to settle up their accounts with Harry West for the tar barrels and the gunpowder they had burned in the Fourth of July celebration. Harry West said that he was out of pocket to that degree that each of the boys owed him about a dollar and a half. Teddy Goodlove had staved off the evil day of reckoning by demanding the items supporting this statement. Harry had also talked about ten dollars, and as there were twelve boys concerned the others could n't see how each owed so much money. Twelve goes into ten, —

“Twelve does n't go into ten,” said Gay.

Well, whatever it was, a dollar and a half for each boy would make more than ten dollars.

Tish could have told the boys in a minute just how much everybody owed everybody else. But then for Jem to take Tish into his confi

dence was to give her reason to point an accusing finger at his conscience for a year to come; to make her say sadly that this was not the way to set an example to the parish. More than this, both Tish and Emily were to have birthdays before many weeks were over, and this statement of ways and means would put an end to Jem's giving either of them presents. Jem had the greatest possible regard for his sisters. Besides, his own birthday was the first of October, and Tish had promised him a new toolbox, and Emily's presents to her brother and sisters were always given with a lavish hand by Mrs. Nicoll herself.

"A fellow does feel so mean," Jem said now to Gay, "not to have any money to give his sisters presents."

"I want to g-g-give Emily something myself," said Gay.

If only they could comprehend clearly just where they stood. The situation was so complicated. It seemed impossible somehow to get it out of a tangle. The very day Gay arrived he had been asked to subscribe to the powder and tar-barrel fund; but Lucy being in possession of all the money belonging to the twins, Gay had borrowed all that Jem possessed, which

was forty-eight cents. He still needed twenty-seven cents in order to make out the amount of the general assessment, said to be seventy-five cents. Next day he had set to work to move Lucy to the degree of letting him have the silver dollar which had been brother John's parting tip. This Gay at once lent to Jem. Anybody can see how difficult a matter it was to understand exactly how much Jem owed Gay and Gay owed Jem. Every time the two were alone they tried to figure out the thing. One reason that made it so puzzling was that it would never come out twice alike. For example:—

Gay's account No. 1.

Owed Harry West for gunpowder,	\$.75
“ “ “ “ tar barrel,	.10
Borrowed from Jem,	.48
Lent Jem,	1.00
	\$2.33

Jem's account No. 1.

Credit.		Debit.	
Lent Gay,	\$.48	Owed Harry West	
Borrowed from Gay,	1.00	for powder,	\$.75
	—	Owed Harry West	
credit,	1.48	for tar barrel,	.10
balance,	1.10	for horns,	.25
	—		
		balance,	\$1.10
in hand,	\$2.58	Brought over.	

Jem was proud of this account. The figures told a flattering tale ; but where was that \$2.58 that he had in hand ? Gay, as well, could n't decide whether his \$2.33 was what he had or what he owed. If he had it in hand he could n't for the life of him tell where it was, unless Lucy had taken possession of it, in which case it was n't in his hand but in hers. If he owed it, he might as well die at once, for he never could go on living with such a debt hanging over him, and Lucy would never give him the money to pay it.

Gay went at his account afresh each day. Once he almost fainted when he saw the amount ; but Jem came to his relief and showed he had added in the date, thus making a sum total of something approaching nineteen hundred dollars.

They finally settled down on this basis :—

Gay's account.

Owed Harry West,	\$.85	
Paid " "	.48	
Owed Jem Nicoll,	.48	
	\$1.81	carried forward \$2.81,
Lent Jem Nicoll,	1.00	but Jem owes me part of
		that dollar.

Jem's account.

Owed Harry West,	\$1.10	But Gay owes me part
Borrowed from Gay,	1.00	of this.
	\$2.10	

One trouble had been that Harry West's account was not a fixed quantity. It did not go up and down, but steadily up. First it had been seventy-five cents; then that had n't included the tar barrels, which made it ten cents more; the horns came in later; and then finally there was a suggestion of "*sundries*."

"Father says we must find out that our acts have consequences," remarked Jem ruefully. "But he only meant the smashin' people's windows."

"You haven't told him about paying Harry West?" Gay inquired.

"No. He's cut off my pocket money for a year already; he might be cuttin' it off for two years," was Jem's reply.

"My f-father always says ch-children don't need any money," Gay observed. "He says he d-don't want us to think about money."

"I don't want to be thinkin' about money," said Jem. "I hate to have to keep thinkin' about money. When you've got money you don't need to be thinkin' about it, but when you have n't got it you can't help thinkin' about it."

It was the day after the clam-bake that Teddy Goodlove brought word to the boys that Harry West was going away on a visit, and wishing to

have his account settled, had brought it to a practical basis. Each of the eleven boys was to pay him fifty cents down and then "call it square." There was a generous sound to this, but then Gay asked, —

"Did all the boys pay him seventy-five cents to begin with?"

No, Teddy replied. Nobody had paid him anything yet. Harry was quite out of pocket.

"I p-p-paid him that f-f-forty-eight cents I b-b-borrowed from you, Jem," Gay spluttered.

Jem had also paid Harry West the dollar he borrowed from Gay. And if Gay had paid Harry forty-eight cents, and Jem had paid him that silver dollar borrowed from Gay, why then, it did seem, — was n't it rather — — ?

Uncertainty began again. Even Teddy wavered; but then, remembering his mission, he said plausibly, —

"The fifty cents is additional. That makes it all right. Harry will call it square."

There was something reassuring in the sound of this.

"The fifty cents is additional." They remembered that there had been a mention of "sundries," and perhaps this fifty cents cleared up that mystery. There was balm and comfort

in the sound of "all right." They longed to have the account "all right." But was this all right? All right for Harry West no doubt, but how about themselves? Nevertheless, the clearness, the conciseness, of this scheme was in its favor. Pay down fifty cents, call it square, and there was an end to these perplexing accounts which added up first one way and then the other. The thing would be off one's mind; self-respect, independence, a feeling that one could call one's soul one's own would return. Fifty cents could do a great deal for the boys. Only, *where was that fifty cents to come from!*

"Now, no asking your mother or sisters or your aunts or cousins for this money, Jem," Dr. Nicoll had said when he cut off the monthly allowance. "No sneaking out of the results of your own folly at somebody else's expense. I want you to feel that when a man sins against law and order he has got to pay for it."

This had made it a point of honor with Jem not to tell cousin Bevis of his necessities.

Jem and Gay had confided their troubles to Captain Narraway.

"Wa'al, boys, I'll just say this," said the captain. "When I've needed money I've jest sot to work and airned it."

“I should like nothin’ better than earnin’ some money,” said Jem. “I’ve thought of it, but I don’t know how to do it unless somebody would buy my engine. Then I’d make another.” This dazzling scheme dangled before his eyes temptingly for a moment; then he remembered that all the boys he knew (except Harry West) were in the same financial straits as himself. (Jem did offer his engine to Harry that afternoon in payment for his debt; but Harry had no taste for engines, said he would n’t accept it as a gift.)

“I never did believe,” the captain went on to say, “in boys getting money too easy. It don’t do a boy the least bit of harm not to know where his next meal is to come from.”

“I should like that,” said Gay. “I always thought it would be the most sp-sp-splendid thing in the world to be a p-p-pirate.”

Gay didn’t look as if he would be a very bloodthirsty pirate.

This was not, however, what the captain had meant.

“Should you like to be a burglar?” inquired the captain.

Oh no, Gay would much rather starve than be a burglar.

“Well, it’s about the same thing,” said the captain. “A pirate, that is, what you think is a pirate, swaggers round with a red sash and a sword and cocked hat, while a burglar crawls in at the cellar window. They are both, the pirate and the burglar, hankering after money that belongs to other people; like highwaymen stopping honest people going about their business and bidding them stand and deliver; like beggars confessing that they have n’t worked and won’t work. No, you boys must n’t be beggars or highwaymen or burglars or pirates. There is just one sort of money in this world that is n’t bad for the soul, —and that is the money you’ve airned honestly. A man is worth his wages.”

This was excellent preaching, but it was preaching in the desert as far as Gay and Jem were concerned. They did not belong yet to the great army of workers.

“My b-b-brother B-Bert,” Gay now observed, after rummaging his memory a little, “wanted a knife with six blades that cost two dollars. F-father said his own knife was good enough, but B-Bert didn’t think so. He wanted to make some money, and he and cousin Frank Potter happened to see some sp-splendid black-berries just getting ripe, —it was just over a

stone-wall, and they did n't think any harm: so they p-picked them and then went round Swallowfield selling them for ten cents a quart; for they told people who they were, and said they were trying to make some money. They did make about three dollars, and Bert had enough to buy the knife and Frank Potter bought something too."

Jem's eyes sparkled.

"Why could n't we do somethin' like that?" he inquired. "I think it was perfectly grand."

"F-father did n't think so," replied Gay with a little sigh. "When he saw that B-Bert had the knife, first he gave him a licking for not minding. Then he made him take back the knife to the storekeeper and get the money he had paid for it, and afterwards return the money to everybody who had bought the berries, saying that Mr. Lee preferred that when his son turned peddler he should n't wheedle money out of his friends,—that the berries were a present."

Jem's face fell.

"I know," he now admitted, "that would be just what father would say."

"That was n't all," Gay continued. "It turned out they was n't wild blackberries Bert

and Frank had picked: they came out of Squire Fuller's fruit garden. They were Lawton blackberries that he expected to get a prize for at the Horticultural Show."

Jem whistled. He felt for Bert. It was the sort of thing that might have happened to himself.

"Did Bert get another lickin'?" he inquired feelingly.

"He did n't g-get another licking exactly," replied Gay. "But I d-don't believe he would have minded a licking so much as the scolding, and afterwards he had to go and ask Squire Fuller's pardon, and Mrs. Fuller's pardon too. He has never liked to hear bl-bl-blackberries spoken of since."

Captain Narraway was sitting in the doorway of what he called his "oyster house," mending a slit in a sail. The boys were never tired of watching the captain sew, with a "sailor's thimble" on the palm of his hand. The captain was proud of his needlework, as well he might be. What he especially piqued himself upon was the knot he made in his thread, so huge that it was a real structure.

"Now the difference between a man and a woman," he would often say, "is shown in

a good many things, but nothing quite so well sets it off as the way they sew. A man always thinks to make a knot, whereas a woman — she makes a knot or she does n't make a knot, just as it happens. I've seen 'em draw the thread through three times in succession without its catching."

Jem and Gay had tried to apply this standard of masculine superiority to their sisters, but they had an idea that Tish's and Lucy's thread had a knot at the end; perhaps not as big as the captain's, but equally efficacious. They liked this queer cobwebby place of the captain's, where he kept his oars and boat-hooks and baskets and sea-chests and dried seaweed and shells of curious sea-creatures. An ancient and fish-like smell pervaded it, partly from the fact that in the fall and winter he stored a good many oysters there.

As I said before, he was to-day mending a rent in his sail made by "one of them dumb idiots that don't know how to handle a boat," who had run into him. The captain had mused for a few minutes over Gay's story, and now said: —

"Your father is a just man, I reckon, so he's a strict man. But I don't exactly see why he was so sot against Bert's making money, — only

Bert had no business to go meddling with the squire's fruit patch."

"Father does n't want us to be thinking about money," Gay explained, "and he does n't want us to be hankering after more than he is willing and able to provide for us. He says the wanting more money is at the bottom of all the mischief in the world."

"Does n't he want his sons to make their living?" demanded Captain Narraway.

Oh, yes, Gay said; that came later. "Let there be a few years when you can think of higher and better things than money," Mr. Lee had said, "when you are not elbowing and pushing and trying to get ahead of others in the struggle for existence."

Jem was ready enough to accept this doctrine. He knew that all the troubles he had at present came from being in debt, from longing to get out of debt, and also to make a little money to buy the girls birthday presents. To be told, however, at this present moment to think of higher things than money was like telling a man in the midst of a quaking bog to admire the beauty of the firmament, when he knows it needs all his efforts to jump from one tussock to another in order not to be swallowed up. The

first thing to do is to get out of the quagmire; then he will be glad enough to sit and smile at the sky for a week.

“Supposin’,” Jem said, fixing his eyes on Captain Narraway, “that Gay and I were to go fishin’, and sell the fish, — only father would n’t let me sell the fish to people I know.”

Captain Narraway looked up and nodded.

“High Elms ain’t the only place in the world,” he remarked.

A very interesting conversation ensued, the captain offering more than one suggestion, finally winding up by consulting his tide-table.

“It’s low water outside,” he remarked, “day after to-morrow at six o’clock. We should have to start just after four.”

CHAPTER XV

THE ANTIQUE ROOM

MR. BEVIS had had a little illness after the Fourth of July, and Jem and Gay could n't get over the idea that the cannon had something to do with it. The doctor did n't give the disease any name; perhaps it had n't any name. He came over twice a day and took Mr. Bevis's temperature, felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, then frowned and shook his head. Finally, not being able to make anything out of it, he told Mr. Bevis not to get up for a few days; and to see that his orders were obeyed he sent for a trained nurse. Oh, that nurse! Until she came Dorothy and Marcia and Tish and Emily had gone to see Mr. Bevis twice a day and had enjoyed their visits very much. Everybody in the neighborhood sent the invalid fruit and custards and jellies and floating island, for which he had no appetite; so offered them to his visitors, and the girls devoured them all with much pleasure.

In fact, Emily had said frankly, "Oh, I do love to have you sick, cousin Bevis."

The coming of the trained nurse put an end to these visits. She would not let the children go near Mr. Bevis, and they more than suspected, — however, we ought not to say it. Besides, nurses have to keep up their strength. Sitting up late, getting up early, and all that is exhausting, and custards, jellies, dishes of fruit, etc., — but no, we ought not to suggest such a thing!

They did n't like the nurse's name, to begin with. It was Miss Tarbox. Miss Tarbox herself was a massive young woman, rather good-looking, with a solid, round head, a full forehead and temples; big, round eyes, plump, rosy cheeks, and a heavy chin. She was both tall and broad, and with her high, airy cap and huge white apron, and one hand on each side, entirely filled up the doorway when she came to tell the children that Mr. Bevis was going to sleep, or was just about to take his beef tea, or was resting after he had had massage, — all with such an air of command that Dorothy, Marcia, and Tish retreated, feeling themselves to be quite beaten.

"Oh, I do wonder if cousin Bevis likes it,"

Dorothy would say. And Marcia would observe, —

“I am very sure he does n’t like it. She’s a perfect terror.”

And Tish would say, “I’m just sure she starves him.” Tish was thinking of those pears and cherries and custards and jellies which would never have done for the sick man.

The children tried to rouse Miss Rachel’s alarm in behalf of her brother given over to Miss Tarbox’s tender mercies; but Miss Rachel was putting the final touches to the “antique room,” and was most grateful to the nurse for assuming all the duties.

“Brother Bevis is doing admirably, thank you,” she would say. “By the end of another week I hope we shall have him about again.”

By the end of another week! There were so many things they needed cousin Bevis’s advice and help about. Really Dorothy felt quite desperate.

“For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And thou away, the very birds are mute.”

That was what she wanted to tell him. For if the birds sang, it did n’t count with cousin Bevis ill. Dorothy never could keep a secret unless she told it first to cousin Bevis, and she

was so bursting with secrets nowadays, they really stuck out all over her. She wanted to go down to the marshes and gather marshmallows when they came out; this was a sort of joke, because Lucy and Gay thought that marshmallows were something to eat. Besides, there was the important matter of Emily's and Tish's approaching birthdays; then Jinny. Jinny gave them so much to talk about.

Really, one could n't get on without cousin Bevis at all. And the very idea of his being held prisoner by this terrible nurse, with her massage and her pills and her powders. Oh, it could not be borne.

The children had come over one afternoon to make inquiries, and found Truett in the garden. Truett beckoned Dorothy into the corner.

"I've been a-thinking," said Truett, "how it could be done. I'll ask the nurse to come out and look at them raspberries, — they're a picter! An' while she's here, jest you all rush in! But hide till I've called her."

So Marcia, Tish, Dorothy, and Emily huddled behind a clump of azaleas until they saw Miss Tarbox's white cap and apron going down the path to the fruit garden. Then how they scampered. There stood somebody at the library

window beckoning. Up went the sash, and in another moment Emily was lifted over the window ledge and the rest had scrambled over.

"Here we are, cousin Bevis," said Dorothy.

Cousin Bevis was arrayed in a long, gray dressing-gown. He looked a little pale, perhaps, but otherwise there was nothing alarming about his appearance.

"Here you are, Dorothea," he replied. "Oh, Dorothea, I thought you had deserted me. How glad I am to see you!"

"I have been over to see you every morning and every afternoon, cousin Bevis," Dorothy replied with some natural indignation. "We have all been over. But the nurse said you were to be kept very quiet."

"I've been kept quiet till I'm half dead," said cousin Bevis.

"She was always just going to give you some beef tea," Dorothy proceeded.

"Dorothea," said cousin Bevis with a shudder, "never mention the word 'beef tea' to me. I never wish to hear the word 'beef tea'; I never wish to see beef tea; above all, I never, never wish to taste beef tea again."

At this very moment in came the nurse, with a pretty china cup with two handles, on a tray.

She looked at Dorothy and Tish and Marcia and Emily with extreme surprise.

"How did you get in?" she inquired.

"By the window," replied Marcia, who was not so much afraid as the others.

"It is the doctor's orders that the patient shall be kept very quiet," said Miss Tarbox seriously. Then, pausing before Mr. Bevis, she observed, —

"Time for your beef tea."

To everybody's surprise, cousin Bevis meekly accepted the cup of bouillon, broke a biscuit into it, and ate it by spoonfuls. While he was doing this, the nurse stood before him with a hand on each side, watching him with an air of satisfaction.

"I think," she said then, addressing Dorothy, "that the patient ought to rest now. He might go to sleep."

If it had been only Dorothy and Tish they would have run away; but Marcia was braver.

"He will sleep better at night," she said, "if he keeps awake now. We have come to cheer him up."

"The doctor did not say anything about his being cheered up," replied the nurse indignantly. "He said the patient must not be excited."

"We shan't excite him," said Marcia. "We'll just cheer him up."

The nurse stood for a moment speechless with astonishment, then saying to Mr. Bevis, —

“I will go and make your wine-whey,” she went out.

“Marcia,” said cousin Bevis, “I think you have saved my life. She has sat on me night and day, day and night, and how much do you suppose she weighs?”

He held out his hand to Marcia; she took it, and the others joined hands and they all danced, even cousin Bevis capering in his slippered feet. Still he kept looking towards the door.

“Do you think we might bolt it, bar it?” he inquired in a whisper. “I don’t want that wine-whey.”

“Oh, I thought perhaps you liked the wine-whey,” said Marcia.

“Like wine-whey? Marcia, I never wish to hear the word ‘wine-whey’; I never wish to see wine-whey; above all, I wish never to taste wine-whey again.”

At this very instant in came Miss Tarbox with a small glass on a little salver.

“Here is your wine-whey,” she said, putting it down on the little table beside Mr. Bevis, and then standing before him with a hand on each side, watching him until he finished it to the

last drop. She did not deign to speak to the children this time. Emily sat watching her with astonishment. Marcia had hidden behind a window-curtain ; Tish pretended to be reading ; and Dorothy, sitting beside cousin Bevis, made an effort to look proper. It was Tish who giggled, — the excellent and proper Tish, who ought to have set an example. And when that sound came, something behind the window-curtain seemed to explode.

Still the nurse seemed only to see Mr. Bevis, and remarking to him that in fifteen minutes it would be time to take his temperature, out she went once more, and the children once more came up and danced round him.

“What are you going to have next?” asked Marcia.

“It will depend on my temperature,” said cousin Bevis mournfully. “If it’s quite normal I may have an egg on toast.”

“Do you like an egg on toast, Mr. Bevis?” inquired Marcia.

“Marcia,” said cousin Bevis, “do you see those books on the table?” The girls had observed that on the long library table was a row of encyclopædias, all wide open. “I have been reading up the articles on starvation,” Mr. Bevis

went on. "Men have supported life for forty days without food."

"Oh, how dreadful!" murmured Dorothy.

"Dreadful? I'm pining for starvation," said Mr. Bevis. "You can't think what it is to be used as a receptacle for liquid food! She has been at my elbow for days, insisting every other moment on pouring some sort of mixture into me. She wakes me out of my sleep to feed me! She is so afraid nature will not be supported! She seems to consider me a hogshead, a puncheon, a tun! Oh, Dorothy, starvation seems to me the most blessed thing in the world!"

"I don't want to be starved," said Emily alarmed. "I want something to eat now, cousin Bevis."

Cousin Bevis made a gesture towards the biscuit jar, and Emily fell upon them.

"I was reading up the accounts of the famine in Ireland," he went on with enthusiasm. "I suppose, Marcia, you and Tish know that the people of Ireland depended almost solely on the potato crop, and when the potatoes failed, why, they had nothing to eat, — nothing to eat whatever." Cousin Bevis seemed actually to revel in the idea of it.

"Was it potato-bugs that ailed the pota-

toes?" Dorothy inquired with an air of experience.

"No, the potatoes rotted in the ground. There was nothing else to fall back on, nothing." He stopped to heave a sigh. "No such chance here," he said with an air of dejection. "She keeps telling me that as soon as I get a little better I shall have some solid, nourishing food, — chops, beefsteaks, a light pudding. This abominable country is full of things to eat." He shook his head in despair; then turning to a more pleasing subject, proceeded. "In India they have famines when the rice crop fails. The people drop down dead like flies from starvation."

"Oh, cousin Bevis," cried Dorothy, "don't think of such dreadful things."

"Oh, I like to think of them," said Mr. Bevis. "I just simply pine for famine and starvation. Oh, to wake up in the morning and not have any breakfast. Not a sup or a bite before luncheon, and then nothing for luncheon whatever. No afternoon tea, and then no dinner but air! That is my notion of comfort."

"I should n't like it," said Dorothy.

"I should n't like it," said Marcia. "It makes me hungry to think of it."

"I should n't like it at all," said Tish.

Emily had eaten all the cream crackers in one jar and was beginning on the water-thins. She was evidently trying to get ahead of famine. Marcia went on to observe: —

"Miss Burt used to say, 'Make your patient hungry and keep him so. Then he will get well.'"

"Marcia," said cousin Bevis, "say that again."

"Miss Roxy Burt used to say, 'Make your patient hungry and keep him so,'"

repeated Marcia.

"Make your patient hungry," said cousin Bevis. "Sublime idea! Suppose I were to cry *Eureka* and rush through the streets like Archimedes. What would the people of High Elms say?"

He could at least jump up and invite the children to dance, and with hands joined they were all capering to and fro, when the nurse appeared. She had a thermometer in her hand.

She looked very much surprised, but she looked also as if she would have been a great deal more surprised if she had n't predicted that all sorts of things would happen if those naughty

children were let in. Mr. Bevis had flung his foot so high in his last antics that his slipper came off, and she had caught it in mid-air. She brought the slipper to him and, taking hold of his hand and guiding him to a chair, now put it on.

"I am afraid that you are quite feverish," she said. "I can see that you are a good deal excited."

Mr. Bevis opened his mouth and in went the thermometer. There was something so quiet, so strong, so masterful about that nurse! She had such an air of doing just what she had come there to do! To have gone against her orders would have been to sin against law, order, and propriety. But cousin Bevis looked so unhappy, he seemed so shut away from them with that dreadful instrument hindering him from speaking, even from breathing, that little Emily began to cry. The others had to take her attention off and console her. How long those five minutes were! The nurse liked always, perhaps, to do a little bit more than her duty, and so kept it in half a minute extra. Then how eagerly she looked at it, hoping that it had gone up to 104°! Even 102° might have pleased her, but it had stuck at the normal.

She turned it round in every light. She seemed quite unwilling to accept the testimony. But there it was, — only a trifle above 98°, though the sick man had been dancing and throwing his slippers about.

“I think,” she said, “that you have had quite enough conversation for to-day. I have the doctor’s orders to keep you very quiet. I will bring you a poached egg in fifteen minutes.”

This time Marcia said, “Yes, it’s time to go home;” and off they went, having arranged that they should all come over next day and celebrate Mr. Bevis’s recovery.

The doctor having made up his mind that it was no use to try to keep Mr. Bevis ill any longer, the nurse went away next day with her bag and band-box.

Cousin Bevis was sitting in the garden-room when the children went over at four o’clock, looking out at the garden, which sparkled like a kaleidoscope. The blossoms of the trumpet-creeper, which covered one of the arbors, were coming out, and the hummingbirds had found them.

“I’m glad to see you all,” said Mr. Bevis. “I’m so lonely without my nurse. I miss her dreadfully.”

"I have left brother Bevis alone a little too much," Miss Rachel explained to Dorothy, "for I wanted to put the last touches to the antique room. It seemed to me a very good time to let you all have a peep at it. Then next week I shall invite everybody in High Elms to see it."

"Nobody cares now whether I eat or not," Mr. Bevis pursued. "Not a thing has been offered me since an early dinner."

"There was a very good dinner," said Miss Rachel, explaining to Marcia. "Brother Bevis seemed to enjoy it. There was beef broth, a roast loin of lamb with peas and new potatoes, a nice salad, and a custard."

"But nobody cares nowadays whether I eat or not," said Mr. Bevis mournfully. "Miss Tarbox used to stand and gaze at me until I was stuffed full."

"I thought you didn't like the things she gave you, cousin Bevis," said Dorothy.

"I see now that it was just simply her kindness of heart," said cousin Bevis. "Nobody will wake me up in the middle of the night any more and pour hot milk down my throat. I shall lie and starve and nobody will come near me."

However, cousin Bevis put by his regrets for

Miss Tarbox, and they were all about to follow Miss Rachel up to see the antique room, when a visitor appeared, and who should it be but Mrs. Witham! Could anything ever have been better? Miss Rachel said afterwards that being, as she naturally was, a little nervous about admitting visitors to the antique room, nobody else that she knew would have suited the occasion. Mrs. Witham exactly suited it.

“How do you do, Miss Bevis,” Mrs. Witham said, coming into the garden-room, dressed in handsome black silk, a bonnet trimmed with roses, a lace shawl on her shoulders, and black lace mitts on her hands, — altogether of such a fashionable appearance that cousin Bevis was for a moment in terror of his life, for he still wore the gray dressing-gown. “How *do* you do, Miss Bevis! And if here ain’t Dorothy, blessed child that she is. And all these girls and boys! Why, your quiver is full of them. There can’t be too many, that I always did say. Captain Witham and I stopped after we’d had two, but our hearts are big enough to take in the whole world. You told me to come, Miss Bevis, and I have been coming for weeks and weeks. I thought I would bring you a couple of pies, you and your little girl seemed to enjoy

mine so much that day, and I wanted to tell you how beautiful that new cupboard is. Captain Witham he watched every nail the carpenter put in, and he says it's so fresh and sweet he really thinks the pies taste better than they used to even, although he always seemed to like them."

While this speech was proceeding, Mrs. Witham had shaken hands with Miss Bevis, Mr. Bevis, Marcia, Tish, Lucy, Jinny, Peggy, Jem, and Gay; had handed the pies to Dorothy, and now paused before little Emily, who was looking at her in intense surprise.

"If you ain't the sweetest, cutest, cunningest little critter I've seen for a long while," said Mrs. Witham in admiration, holding out her hand to Emily. "Just give me a kiss, won't you, dear?"

Emily, however, shook her head and turned away.

"She's such a little thing. She isn't old enough to know how to be polite," murmured Peggy, blushing for such manners.

"Oh, I'm old enough to know how to be polite," said Emily: "and if I'm not polite, it isn't because I don't know how to be polite, but because I don't feel like it."

“Ain’t that cute?” said the admiring Mrs. Witham, by this time following Miss Rachel into the dining-room to see the Elizabethan relics. There stood Mrs. Lorenzo Sloper’s cabinet, with its beautifully worked cornices and the lovely fluted and twisted pillars at each corner. The old English lettering of the legend had been restored; that is, only two of the original letters were left, and one of those was broken off so that one could n’t be sure whether it was t or f. Mr. Bevis had supplied this text: —

Be the day never so long,
At night cometh even-song.

The stately sideboard, as it stood opposite with its wonderfully carved panels, was a still more sumptuous piece of furniture; and Miss Rachel not only had a spasm of conscience (not the first) to think that she had paid so little for it, but trembled lest the former possessor might feel that she had been taken advantage of, perhaps want to retract the bargain and run away with it. All this time Mrs. Witham was talking in a steady stream. She had not apparently paused long enough in the flow of her discussion to discover that Mr. and Miss Bevis were not husband and wife, not the parents of the crowd of children; thus it could hardly be expected that Miss

Rachel's explanations and apologies could have been of avail.

"There 't is," Mrs. Witham was saying, "big as life and twice as handsome, I might say. Always just a little bit too big for that place at the foot of the cellar stairs; and the cupboard now is just the right size, fits in more snug, and yet each shelf will hold two rows of pies. This old one was a leetle bit crowded with thirty, the new one will hold forty-eight. Captain Witham laid out the platters and counted out the places, and it's a joke of his that when Thanksgiving comes the cupboard must be chuck full. Then, too, I like the light color of the new cupboard so much better than this black, gloomy, carved stuff. It makes it lighter down that dark cellar-way, and I sometimes feel I can't thank you enough, Miss Bevis. Not but this is sort of tasty, in its way, and it looks solid and substantial in your room. You live handsome! That silver now is a beautiful old-fashioned pattern. I remember Squire Cowles's wife up at Northbury, where I used to live before me and Captain Witham came to Old Farms, had a cream jug with just that sort of beading. When we lived at Northbury we always went with the very fust people. Mis' Cowles and

I was real intimate, and when she died Squire Cowles invited me to sit among the mourners. I always did have a sort of natural taste for the fust people, — and all this reminds me of Mis' Cowles."

They had heard a good deal more about Squire Cowles's wife before Miss Rachel could get in her invitation to Mrs. Witham to come upstairs and see "the antique room." More than one piece of furniture in the dining-room reminded her of the possessions of the "fust people" up in Northbury; but at last the move was made, and they were all on their way upstairs. Miss Rachel had been thinking about this antique room so long, the subject had so haunted her by night and by day; she had read so many books about colonial ways and doings; she had written so many letters to authorities on colonial subjects, that she really had a good deal to say. Her idea had been to reproduce the sort of bedroom that Mrs. Thomas Bevis would have had when the house was first built, — that was, in 1699. She had been very conscientious, aiming only to be faithful to the antique.

She now led the way, holding Dorothy by the hand, for Dorothy had been more in the secret of the enterprise than had anybody else. Mrs.

Witham and Marcia came next, Mrs. Witham telling all the time about the balusters, the stair carpet, the rods, all of which were an exact reproduction of those formerly used by Squire Cowles's wife; and Mr. Bevis, with Carlo, Flossy, and Toby, made the tail of the long procession. The children were all a good deal excited, and expectation had reached a high pitch by the time Miss Rachel flung open the door. It was a solemn moment to Miss Rachel, the sort of moment that really comes but once in our lives. She had thought and planned and talked and studied so much, and now she was to find out whether her work was appreciated. She stood with a little spot of color burning on each cheek, and was just about to say:—

“This, brother Bevis, and all you dear little cousins and friends, is my antique room,” when Mrs. Witham saved her the trouble.

“So this is the antique room! Well, isn't this an antique room? Well, I never expected to see this sort of thing again, but here 'tis, natural as life. Look at that four-post bedstead now, and the little canopy on top, and that dimity! There's nothing so pretty in the world as dimity! If that isn't the most splendid feather bed! And there's nothing like a feather

bed for comfort. We never sleep on anything else, Captain Witham and I. Leastwise, if we do have a mattress on top of it in summer, it's only for coolness, and the feathers are underneath for softness."

Then the pillows, of the nice old-fashioned small sort, the elaborately worked counterpane, the pieced silk quilt, and the hand-made linen — Mrs. Witham appreciated it all. Everything reminded her of her own and her husband's family possessions, and also of the household gear of Squire Cowles's wife and of the grandeur and charm which belongs to the "fust people."

Nothing could have been more welcome than this flood of discourse, for even Dorothy was staring in astonishment at the stiffness, the bleakness, the barrenness of this "antique room," of which they had expected so much. Emily frankly exclaimed to Peggy, "Why, is that all it is?" What they expected they could never have told. What they saw was a mahogany bedstead with high carved posts and a canopy, the bed made up so high that a little set of steps was provided to climb up into it. There was a large chair beside the bed, covered with dimity, and a rush-bottomed small chair at each window; there was also a spindle-legged table,

with a silver candlestick and a tray containing a pair of snuffers and an extinguisher; a chest of drawers with brass handles and a glass on top; and in the corner the smallest possible washstand, with a bowl and pitcher about the size that Dorothy used for her oatmeal at breakfast. Then the final touch, which positively put Mrs. Witham into raptures, was that the bare floor was delicately sprinkled with sand.

"Is n't it beautiful!" she went on, her flow of admiration filling up any awkward pause. One thing was just more beautiful than another. If there was one thing she loved better than another it was a spindle-legged table; just a little top-heavy and likely to be knocked over, but so light and handy. Then the candlestick, reminding one of good old-fashioned times when a candle was a candle and had to be made out of your own tallow or your own beeswax. Then was n't that washstand neat? Rather small, but in old times people did n't think so much of splashing about in water as they did now. When a boy (here she addressed Jem and Gay) was tumbled out of bed before daylight to go a mile off to the next neighbor's and get a coal from their fire, he did n't generally stop to break the ice in his pitcher first to take a bath.

Mrs. Witham had driven down to High Elms with a neighbor, who had gone about her business, but now came for her. Miss Rachel tried to keep her for a cup of tea and a biscuit, but to have paused to drink the tea would have been to waste the last precious opportunity to pour out her flood of admiration. It was still unexhausted when she got into the wagon; as they all stood at the gate and watched her drive off, they could hear exclamations of, "So beautiful!" "So like what Squire Cowles's wife used to have;" and her final word was to thank Miss Bevis for the new cupboard.

Miss Bevis could hardly help being pleased that the opening of her antique room had been such a pleasant and impressive occasion.

"How did you like the antique room, my dear?" she now said, addressing Marcia.

"Oh, very much indeed," said Marcia.

Each one of the children was asked in turn, and each one thought it was very nice, until it came to little Emily, who said she didn't like it at all. When asked what she objected to, she said it was n't the bed; she liked the bed; she also liked the chairs and the chest of drawers and the little glass, and the washstand.

But what was it she did n't like?

"Was it the warming-pan, Emily?" Peggy inquired.

"Yes, I don't like the warming-pan," said Emily.

"I hope you liked it, brother Bevis," Miss Rachel now said, after satisfying herself that everybody else was delighted.

"My dear Rachel," said Mr. Bevis, "your antique room is beautiful, it is admirable. I like it. I approve of it. There is nothing too much, but just enough. A man or woman could live in that room without confusion. Everything could be in order. There would be just one way to do everything; there would be just one place for everything. But then I myself like to have a little too much; I prefer a modern room."

But then, as Miss Rachel said, her object all along had been to show how superior the old-fashioned ways of living were to ours. Our ancestors knew how to go without things.

CHAPTER XVI

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

JINNY could not get over her surprise at the good luck which had come to her. After the two weeks of her holiday were up, Mr. Bevis arranged to have her stay on a month more at the Summer Home. She was still a little delicate, and besides, Mr. Bevis felt as if it were a sort of way of making up to Dorothy for that day in the waiting-room in New York. Two or three times a week Jinny was asked to spend a day at the rectory, at Mrs. Clare's, or at the Bevis's. She got on beautifully with the children generally. She was never weary of watching them, of wondering at them. They were so polite. It was so easy for them to say "Please" or "Thank you so much." They did not snatch or trample on others. Jinny admired them all: Marcia, with her calm, splendid face, its deep, dark eyes burning, its lips like a crimson flower; Tish, so trim, alert, clever; Dorothy, with her serene brown eyes, and her dear, sweet little

ways ; Peggy and Lucy, and Emily, with her wondering looks. Jinny liked to see the girls' rooms ; the quantity of things they had filled her with awe. Even Peggy and Emily owned a bottle of cologne, and gave Jinny a sprinkle of it occasionally. Many of the domestic refinements touched Jinny to the quick, — finger-bowls, for example. Whenever she dreamed of being a lady and having possessions of her own, what she wished for was a bottle of cologne and a finger-bowl.

With all her consciousness that this was a better state of things, she was not quite sure that she wanted to belong to this beautiful world. She did not say to herself that when she went back to the city she would be good, as Dorothy tried to make her wish to be. Jinny had n't come to that point yet. This was a pleasant pause. She was still half a savage. She still had a bit of fierceness in her way of taking things. She was so used to the feeling that she belonged nowhere ; that she would be ordered off ; told to move on. She was so used to watching for her chance, seizing what she could get hold of and making off with it, that the impulse often came upon her even now, when she was offered something.

Then, too, her old self had a way of laughing at her present self. Sometimes when she caught sight of her image in the glass, that old self would speak out and say with derision, —

“Think you’re some, don’t you? Live like a fighting cock, don’t you, nowadays? Shoes and stockings and clean clothes, just like grand folks!”

This old self had to keep quiet before people; but it came out when she was alone, particularly when other people were asleep in the early morning, when, along with the perception that she was waking up in this new, beautiful world, was the hungry, greedy feeling that she ought to be making the most of it.

“The little green leaves will not let me alone in my sleep,” a poet wrote once. Jinny did not put this idea into words when she woke up at dawn: but this feeling that the wind was astir; that the flowers were awake; that there was light in the east; that the birds were chirping, calling, singing, flying, — all made her restless. This experience of life was so precious it seemed a pity to lose any of it. Of course one had to go to bed; but to stay abed when one was wide awake, that was sheer waste!

It was light nowadays long before four

o'clock. Jinny was sure to have gone to bed soon after eight. When she woke up at the Summer Home, there was the long dormitory, with its rows of little beds, each with an eager little sleeper, whom nothing less than the sound of a cannon could have roused. Jinny slid out of her cot, put on her clothes, stole out at the open window to the top of the veranda, and in a moment more had slipped down the trellis and was scudding like a rabbit along the lane. The house stood on a hill a little out of the village. Dancing on with the very spirit of joyousness, Jinny felt herself a part of the morning. It was no difficult matter to get out of sight or out of hearing of any possible light sleeper at the house; the open meadows were not far off, and there was a thin line of woods. She would sing with the birds, dance with the leaves in the wind; then when the sun came up and looked at her, she would make her way back, climb the trellis, throw off her clothes, get into bed,—perhaps even go to sleep and wake up with the rest. There was a welling up of pride all day in Jinny after these morning excursions.

On the afternoon that they were all admitted to the antique room a new idea suddenly came into Jinny's head.

After Mrs. Witham had gone, the children walked in the garden and through the orchard, where the pears and early apples were ripening. There was one tree in particular, of yellow-green apples, and Mr. Bevis said to the boys that when he was a youngster he and his brothers used to race out to this tree in the morning in their nightgowns, and that the one who got there first had all the apples that had fallen over night. Jem and Gay, on hearing this, had looked at each other with a half smile, then nodded at cousin Bevis, and he nodded back.

A certain feeling of mischief, of longing to get the better of somebody, — also of desire to nibble at the fruit, woke Jinny up earlier than ever next morning. Up she jumped, and in five minutes she was out of doors. In the lane she stopped short, almost frightened to see in the northeast horizon not only the brightening of the dawn and the two great stars that she had come to know, but a little moon, like the new moon she had seen at sunset. She did not stay to look long, but set forth in the direction of the village. The whole world was asleep, of course ; yet instinctively, with the feeling of running away from something, of being hunted, she tried to keep under the trees, beneath the shelter of fence and hedge.

It was still more than half dark when she reached the Bevis place. She had planned her approach ; she knew just the gap in the hedge where she was to crawl through. Once inside, she had a fright. There was a curious sound of something rustling, of something stirring ; then came the chirp of multitudes of birds, making such a din she huddled in terror against a tree trunk, feeling as if something threatened her. It lasted but a moment, then all was silent once more. It had grown a little lighter now. Oh, the beauty of the garden and of the lawn and orchard ! Always before she had felt herself apart from it. Now she had a sense of its peace ; of the sweetness of it, from the green grass to the skies against which the tall trees rested, with a little wind just stirring in their tops. A bough of something with white blossoms swung to and fro. The birds began to chirp again, and there were confused beginnings of song, as if they were singing in their sleep.

She had come to the harvest apple-tree, and on the sod beneath lay a wealth of fruit. Jinny laughed to herself in glee. She did not stop to eat, but gathered the apples up in the skirt of her frock. There were enough for her and for Jem and Gay ; but there was a keen zest in the

feeling that she was getting the better of the boys. All the savage in her came out now ; her little thin hands fastened claw-like on the fruit. Although she could hardly carry those she had found on the grass, she pulled at the bough, and when three more fell she clutched at those greedily. But hark ! What was that sound ?

The great chestnut-tree offered a low branch. In a second of time Jinny had clambered up, and perched like a squirrel in the crook of the bough, her bright eyes looking through the leaves.

It was Jem and Gay, and Carlo with them. They, too, had come to look for apples. Oh, how Jinny laughed to herself as she saw them look, and look in vain. She heard their murmurs of disappointment, of wonder, of surprise. It did not occur to the boys that anybody could have got ahead of them. She felt almost like crying out, like exulting over them, letting them know who it was that had stolen the apples. Then there was a soft-voiced discussion between the two boys as to whether, since the ripe apples had not come down in the night, as ripe apples ought to do, they might not be helped a little with a shake of the branch or by throwing up a stick. The point of honor came in, however :

cousin Bevis did n't mean that, Jem said. Then with a sudden, "Oh, cap'n 'll be waitin' for us," off the boys went, leaving Jinny, with the apples, mistress of the situation. It was time for her, too, to go. The flush of dawn had made the stars grow pale. The bough of the chestnut hung over into the next place. She ran to the end, dropped down, and was ready to let the road fly under her while she ran back to the Home with the apples.

She had to stop for a moment to get her bearings. She knew where she was, — on a fine place that lay between the Bevis's and the Clare's. She was on a very green lawn surrounded with trees; this she had to cross, and then there was a clear way out through a sort of wild garden which ended with a rockery. That she was aiming to gain, when something beckoned her. It was only a white marble statue of a little girl, fair and sweet, — a little like Dorothy. But it made Jinny tremble. That finger seemed lifted to remind her, — to remind her of what?

"Oh, Jinny, I want you to be good, — I do want you to be good," Dorothy herself seemed to be saying, standing in the statue's place. A curious feeling of uneasiness stole over Jinny.

A moment before, a spirit of mischief, of liking to get the better of everybody, had governed her. At this moment she accused herself, she loathed herself. She could have battered her head against the wall. A great shame seemed to scorch and devour her. She saw her shadow in front of her and felt so lonely, so cut off from the world that she threw herself upon the ground and clung to it.

Just how her thoughts went on it would be hard to tell. She cried a little; she, who had scorned to cry. Tish had told her how the angels up in heaven saw everything, knew everything. That was what the statue meant. Jinny stole another glance at that lifted finger; she tried to think how the angels up in heaven might be pleased. Then, with the glimmering of an idea how things could be put right, Jinny jumped up, regathered her apples into her frock, and ran at the top of her speed after Jem and Gay.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THE DEBT WAS PAID

JEM and Gay had looked forward to the pleasure of munching those apples on the way to the shore. Gay had stayed at the rectory, and Mrs. Nicoll (who had given the boys permission to go on this early fishing excursion with Captain Narraway) had told the cook to have a basket of sandwiches ready for them to take. Now a sandwich put up in the late afternoon by three o'clock next morning is not the most delicate and delicious thing in the world. The apples would have made a very grateful addition to the repast. As it was, Jem and Gay, sleepy, heavy, dull, disappointed, trudged manfully to the dock; the sandwiches they had bolted lying heavy on their spirits. They spoke little. This was not a pleasure excursion.

“Why not go to Belfield and sell the fish and clams you catch?” Captain Narraway had said. “I don’t see that anybody could find fault with your turning an honest penny that way.”

The boys had caught at the idea. In Belfield they were strangers. In Belfield there was no necessity of setting an example to the parish.

"I'll bet captain has forgotten," Jem finally broke silence by saying; and Gay, equally despondent and feeling that everything was going wrong, extended the remark:—

"I'll b-bet so too."

Both lost their bets, for the moment they came in sight of the water there was to be seen a man's figure moving among the boats tied to the dock.

"All right," he called.

"All right, on deck," the boys answered.

"Tide's racing down," said the captain. "Suppose you boys just run up to the fish-house and get two pairs of oars and rowlocks, and a boat-hook. You know where I keep the key."

"All right, cap'n."

"Got a basket?"

"Two baskets," said Jem.

"Fetch another along," said the captain, "and a clam pick. Don't lose time. As soon as I swab off this boat I'm all ready."

Jem and Gay dropped their two baskets on the pier,—the bag of sandwiches in one of

them. It was not yet light, and after fumbling for the key in its secret place by the door, the boys had some difficulty in finding just the right kind of oars, the boat-hook, and the clam pick among the odd and queer things lying on the floor and packed on the shelves inside. The captain had a place for everything and everything was in its place, but it was only the captain who could put his hand on the right thing in the dark. It was not only dark in the fish-house, but it was hot and close. It seemed to the boys as if it had taken them a long time, and it apparently seemed so to the captain, for the moment they appeared he called, —

“I was just starting to look for you. Thought you were lost. Hurry up or we shall lose the tide. I’ve stowed away your baskets and bag.”

The boys hurried on; the captain adjusted the rowlocks and shipped the oars; the boys jumped in, followed by Carlo, and they were off in another minute. Once in the current they ran down swiftly. Queer little sighs and groans and gurgles came from the water which, at first as black as night, soon began to grow pale. The east, lighted up with the colors of the dawn, was hidden by the shores. It was just that time in the morning when, even if one is com-

fortable in bed, one turns on one's pillow, feels chilly, wants another blanket, and hates the thought of the light. The boys were in anything but good spirits. Captain Narraway was spending his own thoughts and strength on his oars and something in Jem and Gay seemed to give way; they were ready to cry. Oh, it was miserable.

Then all at once, as they rounded the shadows of the eastern shore and there began to be a flame of gold in the harbor mouth, the sky, all alight with rose and gold, flared up with the colors of sunrise.

The boys were cheered on the instant. Life once more seemed to hold a promise.

"Jem," said Gay suddenly, pointing his finger at something in the bow of the boat, "see there."

"Yes," said the captain, resting for a minute on his oars; "jest hand me one of them apples. I thought to myself when I seed them, 'You can trust a boy.' But all the same, it's a good idea."

Both fish baskets were almost full of apples.

"Did n't you bring them, captain?" Jem inquired.

"Why no. They are your baskets."

Jem and Gay rubbed their eyes. It all seemed so strange! so mysterious! Had they been half asleep? Had it been only a dream that they had found no apples? It all belonged to the region of doubt and mystery.

The captain never got over laughing at the boys for bringing each a basket of apples in his sleep. Perhaps Carlo could have told the secret of it all, but he said not a word. The boys accepted the miracle, and after eating three or four of those apples life took on a more cheerful aspect. Spirit was once more put into their enterprise. They were after clams and fish. Of clams they were sure. Fish they hoped to catch with some of the clams for bait. Then, with their baskets full of blackfish, they were going on to Belfield to sell them. Fish and clams disposed of, the boys would have money in their pockets. With money in their pockets they could pay off that horrid debt of fifty cents to Harry West. Harry West paid, they could buy presents for Tish and Emily with lavish hand.

(It ought perhaps to be explained that the complicated state of money affairs between Jem and Gay had been settled to their own satisfaction at least. They had swapped knives; then Gay had bought Jem's old locomotive, — the

works of which had never been right, although sometimes it started off very well, — and had given, or was to give when he had the money, twelve cents to boot.)

Captain Narraway, with the help of the current and the tide, had made wonderful headway. They had left the harbor; before them was the open Sound, and towards the north Silver Bar stretched its shining line well above water.

“Now, boys,” said Captain Narraway as soon as they reached the sandbank, “jump out and dig that basket full of clams in no time. I want to be getting this fishing-tackle ready.”

Pick in hand, Jem and Gay tumbled out, Carlo after them. The time had come for action. It was such a comfort to be really doing something. The clams yielded finely, and by the time Captain Narraway had finished mending his sinkers the basket was full.

Jem now took the second pair of oars. It was to be a tough pull over to “the rocks,” where they were to fish. The sun was by this time well up; a breeze was astir, but it was going to be a warm day. Two big basalt rocks lay off a quarter of a mile from the Stillford shore and between them, as Captain Narraway said, there was generally a good chance of catch-

ing a few sizable fish. The tide was beginning to run in by the time they had reached the rocks and anchored the boat. Gay had never fished for anything bigger than minnows before, and he had to learn how to crack a clam against the gunwale, then cut it into pieces with a part of the shell and bait his hooks,—for there were three to every line. Something twitched at his line with startling unexpectedness almost the moment he dropped it. He was afraid to pull it up; and when Captain Narraway drew it in for him, and he saw a blackfish on one hook and a cunner on each of the others, Gay's heart was in his mouth.

“Them pesky cunners don't amount to much,” said the captain. “Still, we won't throw them overboard till we see how the luck goes. Bait again, my boy.”

Gay baited again, and again as soon as he had flung his line he had another bite. The second time he was a little braver, and it was not long before he grew quite expert in taking the fish off the hook. For his luck was wonderful. While Jem and Captain Narraway drew in cunners and horse-shoe crabs, Gay hauled up blackfish after blackfish.

“It always is so,” said Captain Narraway.

"There's just one place where the fish bite better than anywhere else. Then, too, it's the luck of a beginner."

But at this moment Jem himself had a wonderful haul, and by eight o'clock the basket was full of blackfish.

The boys looked at each other and nodded. They were on the high road to fortune. There was more than one reason for being glad to wind up their lines. The sea was smooth, but there was a slight swell which made the boat roll and pitch a little; the glare of the sun on the water was also beginning to be felt. The boys had not felt seasick yet; but they began to have a little feeling in their head, and the bobbing of the boat was something to look forward to with dread. It was this sensation which hindered their showing more elation over their surprising luck.

"Time to be out of this," the captain said. "You're both a little white about the gills. Face round and take the wind."

He was pulling up the anchor. Then he set himself at the oars, and after a few pulls they were among the rippling waves and in the track of the fresh wind, and the boys felt better, — and so did Carlo. They were going well out to

sea, where the tide was less felt than along the shore. They sighted Rosemaryport, and knew that Belfield was only a few miles off. In spite of the splendid possibilities before them, in spite of the magnificent certainty of that basket of blackfish, the boys were dejected. Panic fear had got hold of both of them.

"I was just a-thinkin'," Jem faltered, "that cousin Frank Bevis lives over there at Belfield."

Captain Narraway gave a whistle.

"So he does. I did n't think of that. But law sakes he would n't mind. He would like the joke of it."

Jem could n't feel sure of that.

Captain Narraway began to laugh.

"I did think of proposing," said he, "that I could color you both up with a little speck of lampblack so that your own mothers would n't know you."

That was a splendid idea. It not only insured the safety of the enterprise, but added to its fun. Oh, what a lark to go about blackened like a couple of darkies. The idea roused the drooping spirits of the boys.

"I suppose it will wash off," Gay suggested.

Oh yes; soap and water would soon restore the natural color.

The captain gave Jem the oars, and going to his cuddy-hole, produced a spirit-lamp and a dish. Lighting the first, and holding the second over it, there was soon plenty of coloring matter ready. Then he found two corks, which he gave to the boys along with the lampblack, and told them to rub it in well. In five minutes the thing was done. The transformation was magical. Jem and Gay were turned into regular little Ethiopians, so far as complexions went. Jem's hair, being dark, was in suit; and a little of the lampblack rubbed into Gay's soon made it a good tint. They were great successes. This disguise seemed to make everything easy. The whites of their eyes and the red of their lips set off the ebony of the rest of their faces. Carlo looked at them with his head on one side, a little puzzled to account for their changing color; but then, sniffing at their trousers, made sure that it was nobody but Jem and Gay, and so did n't mind. Fooling a dog is not so easy a matter.

Lest the last half hour before they reached Belfield should be a little blank and dull, the captain tried to brace up the boys by conversation, so that they might be able to play their parts with some dash. He knew how to set Jem to talking.

“Now, what was that, Jem,” inquired captain Narraway, “you were telling me once about a great sea-battle, and the signal that was run up for the whole English fleet? Let me see,—it was, ‘The Queen expects every man to obey orders?’”

“It was the battle of Trafalgar,” answered Jem. “It was fought by the English against the combined French and Spanish fleets, off Cape Trafalgar. The forty ships of the enemy,” said Jem, warming to the subject, “were arranged in a great semicircle. Nelson, who commanded the fleet, was determined to break this line. Just as he was about to let drive at them, he gave orders to have a certain signal run up. One of the captains, when he saw them runnin’ it up on the Victory, said, ‘Why does Nelson waste time? I’m tired of signaling.’ But when he saw what that signal was, he took off his cap, all his men in his ship took off their caps and cheered; all the men in all the English ships took off their caps and cheered. For Nelson’s signal was, ‘*England expects every man to do his duty.*’ And from that day to this the im-per-ish-a-ble order is obeyed all round the globe. England expects every man to do his duty, and they keep doin’ their duty.”

"Fust rate," said Captain Narraway, who was giving mighty strokes to the oars. "Now, what was the other one about meeting the Russian cavalry charge?"

"That happened at Balaklava," said Jem, "in the war of the Crimea. The Russian cavalry were comin', and all there was to meet them was a part of the brigade, — the 93d Highlanders. The commander was Sir Colin Campbell. He stood in front of the line. He took out his sword, waved it, and said, 'Men, we must all die here!' And the Highlanders all cried at the top of their voices, 'We wull, Sir Colin, we wull.'"

Gay's patriotic feelings were hurt. Jem was really as good an American as Gay; but when Gay set to work to cap Jem's stories of English pluck by accounts of American valor, a lively discussion ensued. Captain Narraway could only laugh to see the two little blackamoors earnestly contrasting General Grant with Wellington, Admiral Farragut with Nelson. They were both so excited over the heroic achievements they described, that they had not observed that they had rounded the point, entered a harbor, and were now making rapid headway towards a small pier crowded with people.

Two yachts lay not far off, on whose decks signs of activity showed that they were getting ready to sail. Half a dozen smaller craft were also hoisting sail, and a picnicking party was actually embarking. It was all so gay, so bright, so busy, that the boys gazed at the scene quite bewildered, and Captain Narraway, conscious of his shortcomings in the way of costume, had, at the moment but one anxiety, and that was to reach some quiet corner where he could see without being seen.

"Now then, boys," he said. "Here we are. Belfield seems to be all alive. Now one of you take the clams and the other the fish, and the moment I get alongside of a boat be ready to skip, for there's no room for me to lie to."

The boys obeyed, with the feeling of being face to face with some new and strange experience which made them helpless.

"I'll be lying somewheres round," said Captain Narraway. "I would n't charge too much for the fish; you want to sell 'em, not to carry 'em home; about."— He had reached a line of fishing-boats which made a sort of bridge to the pier. "Now then," he said; and in order to make his order effectual, he himself swung the boys into a light craft that lay alongside. Carlo

scrambled after them, and there the three stood, huddled into the little skiff, not knowing what to do or where to go. Captain Narraway had flatly vanished.

At this moment there appeared two young men, with bright, good-humored faces, and in white duck suits, and white caps, with "Siren" printed in gilt letters on the band.

"Hulloa, get out of this, you little rascals," one of them exclaimed. "What are you doing in my boat?"

"We want to get ashore," said Jem, abject, miserable, longing for a chance to slink into nothingness.

"Let's have those clams," said the other young man. "What do you want for them, Sambo?"

Gay, thus appealed to, could n't have answered a word to save his life. He rolled his eyes helplessly at Jem who, almost equally confused, murmured, —

"Dunno."

"Here's a quarter, — well, say ten cents more for basket and all, — now then, get out of this."

In his haste to free his boat the young man lent a hand to Gay, and in another moment both

boys were on the narrow pier, which was so crowded they could scarcely find a footing. Carlo, almost as much cowed as they were, found himself under foot in everybody's way ; and in five minutes he received more kicks and cuffs than he had ever had before in all his life put together. He was surprised at being treated so roughly ; he was also so surprised at belonging to two down-trodden little colored boys, who were shoved this way and that, he was obliged to sniff every other moment at their legs to make sure they were Jem and Gay. Jem and Gay, not having this resource, doubted their own identity. Altogether it was abject. Sobs gathered in Gay's throat, one burst forth. Jem choked from sympathy. But by this time the crowd of people embarking on the yachts and boats was subsiding. The boys were able to make their way along the pier, and soon reached the shore and stood under the shade of a maple-tree.

Gay reached out his two silver pieces towards Jem.

"Was that enough for the clams?" he asked, blubbering.

"I dunno," said Jem. "I did n't hear what the cap'n was sayin'."

"The man t-took them right out of my hand," said Gay. "I c-c-could n't help it."

"I guess it 's enough," said Jem. He hated the whole thing. The weight of his basket of fish upon his arm was an added trouble. Life at this moment seemed very hard to the boys.

"I d-d-don't know what Lucy would say if she saw me," faltered Gay.

"I was a-thinkin' of Tish just then," Jem replied, "and of mother and Peggy and Emily. Perhaps Emily would like it." Jem gave a dreary chuckle as he spoke.

At this moment he was accosted by a woman, who asked him what kind of fish he had in his basket.

"Blackfish," Jem replied.

"Sure they 're blackfish?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who caught 'em?"

Jem hesitated a moment before uttering Gay's name, then pointing at his friend with his thumb, he said, "Him and me — we caught 'em."

"When?"

"Just this minute got on shore from catchin' 'em."

"Where 's your boat?" demanded the woman suspiciously.

“Lyin’ off there,” said Jem.

“What do you charge for your fish?” she now inquired.

Again Jem was nonplussed, but rallying his forces, asked in turn, —

“What do you generally pay for blackfish?”

“Suppose I give you twenty-five cents for three?” said the woman.

The sale was instantly effected, and the woman with the three fish moved on.

Somehow the world looked brighter. There were eighteen fish in the basket, and the boys tried to make a computation of how much they would come to at this rate. They had sixty cents already, and call it six lots of fish at twenty-five cents a lot, — why that would be a dollar and a half. With two dollars and ten cents in their possession this expedition would not have been made in vain. Their spirits revived.

On the boat they had been under the thrill of such lofty heroism that they had felt as if they were ready to face any difficulty, any danger. They had been cruelly frightened when Captain Narraway dropped them overboard and set them to finding their own adventures. It had seemed a cold and merciless world. “England expects

every man to do his duty," Jem now quoted, and Gay replied, —

"We will f-fight it out on this line if it t-takes all summer."

After all, it was a lark. If they could only act out their parts, put some little dash and go into them. They sold three more fish at a little house along the street, and although for some time after that the fish business seemed slack, they were so much engaged in getting up negro minstrel talk they hardly minded refusals.

They had gone to one house after another. Now, entering a small gate, they found themselves unexpectedly on a large place with wide, beautiful grounds. They had come in by the side entrance and presented themselves at the kitchen door, where the cook was not slow to tell them to go 'long with their nonsense. She did n't buy stale fish from boys who had been peddling it for a week.

"Just done come drawed dem out of the water," said Jem. "Did n't we, Hannibal?"

The cook, struck with the perfection of this dialect, came a little nearer.

"What's that?" she said, taking up a fish, pinching it and looking at its eyes. "You mean you just caught them?"

"Just done come cotched 'em," said Jem.
 "Did n't we, Hannibal?"

"It just d-d-done c-c-come, struck, n-nine o'clock when we c-c-cotched 'em, didn't we, Cæsar?" Gay remarked, then sniggered.

At this moment the lady of the house happened to come into the kitchen.

"What droll-looking little fellows," she said.
 "What have they got?"

The cook explained that they had some very good-looking blackfish, and the mistress told her to buy enough for a course. Company to dinner had come unexpectedly.

"What do you charge for the fish?" the lady inquired, coming nearer to the boys. Cæsar was generally spokesman. When he made no answer Hannibal turned and looked at him. Something had apparently overtaken Cæsar. He was doubled up, perhaps in pain, perhaps looking after his shoe-laces.

"Three for twenty-five cents," Hannibal made haste to reply.

"Is that dear or cheap?" the lady asked the cook. The cook, weighing them in her hand, said that eight or nine fish would be enough. It was pretty dear, she thought. Still the lady did not demur, and now leading the way, said, —

“Come round to the library porch. I’ll ask Mr. Bevis to pay you.”

Guy understood on the instant what ailed Jem. It had clean gone out of their minds that one particular house in Belfield was to be avoided.

“Frank,” called Mrs. Bevis, “come and see these boys with fish. Are n’t they a picture?”

Mr. Frank Bevis, with his hands in his pockets and smoking a cigarette, strolled to the window. He was followed by another gentleman; no other than Mr. Bevis Bevis of High Elms, who had come to spend the day with his nephew and his wife.

“Make them talk a little,” said Mrs. Bevis, sitting down in the porch. “They’ve got the drollest dialect.”

Accordingly Mr. Frank Bevis asked the boys all sorts of questions, chiefly with the idea of amusing his wife. She thought it a capital joke that their names were Cæsar and Hannibal; that they hailed from ole Virginy; and had done come cotched um fish that very morning as the clock done come struck nine o’clock. Mr. Frank Bevis was not suspicious; his wife, Fanny, was not suspicious; not even Mr. Bevis Bevis would have had any suspicions if it had not been for

Carlo. It was Carlo who gave the boys away. Carlo had n't felt quite happy in his mind since Jem and Gay changed color. "Que diable allais-je faire dans cette galère!" he seemed to be thinking to himself. When he smelled of them he might for a moment say, "That is Jem and Gay," but it was all so very queer. It was not until he saw Mr. Bevis that he could make up his mind that it was all right. So the moment that gentleman appeared on the porch up went Carlo, wagging his tail, licked his hand, and sat down on his haunches beside him with an air of preferring this sort of company.

Mr. Bevis said to himself, "That is remarkably like the dog that came to the Clares' with the twins." Then addressing the boys, he inquired, —

"Is this your dog?"

Hannibal said, —

"Yes, massa."

"What 's his name?"

Horrible moment! They had n't named Carlo. Gay collected his thoughts first; they all ran on Roman history. "We d-d-done pl-plum c-c-call him N-Nero," he said.

"Well, Nero," said Mr. Bevis. "Here Nero."

Carlo making no response to this name, Mr. Bevis waxed suspicious. He took off the reading glasses that he wore, put them in his pocket, and took out his far-sighted glasses. The two boys, already anxious to get off, lost no more time, but accepting the money Mr. Frank Bevis held out, were making their way to the gate, when Mr. Bevis Bevis overtook them, and put a hand on a shoulder of each.

"I just done come cotched two make-believe darkies," he said.

"Oh, cousin Bevis," cried Jem, "don't tell. Please don't tell."

"But I want to make sure that nothing is wrong," said cousin Bevis.

"Nothin' at all."

"Honest Indian?"

"Honest Indian."

"Suppose," said cousin Bevis, putting his hand in his pocket, "that I was to buy the rest of those fish?"

The boys were not quite sure that there had not, after all, been a bit of sneaking out of their money troubles. But they were light-hearted nevertheless. Cousin Bevis would n't tell, and somehow cousin Bevis did always know exactly how to help a fellow.

Captain Narraway was glad to see the boys return. He listened to the story of their adventures, and was glad that it had ended just as it did. What were they to do with the fish which, although cousin Bevis had paid for, he had n't taken? Captain Narraway always knew what to do with fish. He found a quiet little place on the shore to cook them, and they had a substantial meal. Before it was over a cloud had risen in the west. They put to sea as soon as they could; but by the time they were off the harbor of Rosemaryport half the sky was bluish-black, covered with a thick canopy of vapors which crept all the time eastward, and from the edge of which hung little scuds of white. Gay ventured to suggest that they should pull for the nearest point of land, but Captain Narraway told him to stay where he was well off.

"It 'll wash off the black," he said.

In another moment a dazzling chain of light ran across the whole sky, and then the great rain-cloud burst upon them. In two minutes the boys, in spite of being wrapped in a couple of old sou'westers, were wet to the skin. Down came the rain in sheets, in bucketfuls, heavy as bullets. And it did wash the boys clean.

They had so much to tell the girls when they

got home about that thunder-shower, nothing seemed to have been omitted out of the day's exploits. Harry West's account was made "square." Everything was so calm, so quiet, so pleasant, the boys felt as if their money troubles were very, very far off.

And the miracle of the apples was quite forgotten.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BIRTHDAY OF LITTLE EMILY

EMILY had been waiting a whole year for her birthday, and at last it had come. She had begged for the privilege of giving out her own invitations ; yet, when she had to make up her mind, — really it was such a responsibility ! Peggy offered to help her ; but Emily said with decision, —

“No, it’s my birfday, ’t is n’t nobody else’s birfday. I’m going to have my own birfday all to myself.”

Finally, after grappling with the idea until her little face was quite tied up in knots, for she had thought so hard, she imparted the secret to Peggy.

First, she was going to invite her mother ; then her father, sister Tish, Peggy, and Jem. The baby could come if he was good ; but she did n’t intend to be troubled with children that cried and asked for things they could n’t have. She wanted cousin Bevis and cousin Rachel,

even though it did seem as if "people more 'n a hundred years old" ought to have had so many "birfdays" they would n't care about anybody's any more. But she liked cousin Bevis and cousin Rachel, and they might come. She wanted also Juno, the calf; Toby, Carlo, and Flossy. That was all, except Jinny, — of course Jinny must come.

"But how about Dorothy and Marcia and Gay and Lucy?" Peggy inquired. Emily sighed.

"I can't ask them," she said with an air of her mind being quite made up.

"Why, I thought you loved Dorothy, Emily?"

"Oh yes, I love Dorothy."

"And Marcia! Why, Marcia is so good to you."

Emily sighed. "Yes, Marcia's good."

"And Lucy and Gay! Why, they would feel dreadfully at being left out. To invite the dogs and not Dorothy and the rest would be quite shocking."

Emily finally confessed that her only reason for slighting them was that there were so many people and only one cake!

Peggy answered triumphantly that there was to be more than one cake; Dorothy had confided to Peggy that Mrs. Clare had a huge one in

preparation. It was to be frosted an inch deep, and there were four little sugar birds to go on top, and four candles to go round it, — so tall, so large, they would burn all through the party. After hearing this news Emily yielded, and Dorothy and her guests were invited. Not even Mrs. Clare was left out.

The party was to begin shortly after breakfast, and was to last till bedtime; that is, the children and the animals were to come in the morning; the elders might wait until afternoon. The calf was the first to arrive. Truett had brought her over before breakfast on his way to the post-office, just to save time. She was adorned with ribbons, and looked like a Swiss cow when she is led up to the high pastures. She brought Emily a present in a bandbox. It was a charming little frilled white sunbonnet, which could very well make up for the sunbonnet Juno had eaten up in the spring. She was tied to a stake in the corner of the rectory grounds, and there was not one of the party that behaved better than did Juno. She was getting quite middle-aged and sober.

It was a beautiful day, — just the sort of day for a birthday. Not so hot that people disliked to move about, and yet so deliciously warm it

seemed good to be out of doors. There was a sort of birthday magnificence about the flowers. It was extraordinary how many roses had burst out; the hollyhocks were coming into bloom, and the most wonderful purple and white stars shone from the clematis vines. The birds tuned up, too, as if the season of song had come back; and, altogether, it was the sort of day to make one glad one had been born into the world.

After Emily had put on Juno's sunbonnet, Jem brought his own present. As we all know, deep had been his anxieties and heart-burning his efforts to obtain the money to buy it. He had had a good many different ideas in his mind as to what he should buy with the money. One had been a doll's tea-set, but Peggy had got ahead of him there. What he had finally chosen was a mechanical mouse. Emily shrieked at the sight of it.

"It won't hurt you, Emily," Jem said soothingly. "It is n't really alive, you know, and could n't bite, even if it wanted to. But it's awfully sweet and cunnin', — see how it jumps."

Emily shrieked again. "You'll have such fun with it," Jem whispered. "You can set it runnin' off across the floor when ladies are callin' on mamma, and they'll be so frightened."

This explanation of the real practical use of the toy pleased Emily.

"I can take it to church and play with it there, can't I, Jem?" she asked, fondling the mouse.

Jem was a little taken aback at this proposal.

"I'm afraid that would n't be settin' a good example," he said. "But perhaps if nobody saw it" —

Peggy's tea-set was just the thing; Tish's offering was a Japanese umbrella; Dr. and Mrs. Nicoll gave the little girl a Bible and Prayer Book. Carlo and Flossy came over, bringing their presents tied round their necks, while Toby brought his in his mouth. Cousin Bevis sent a pair of red slippers with buckles, and Miss Rachel a red silk bag to keep the slippers in. Gay had gone with Jem to Rosemaryport to buy birthday presents, and being struck with the comparative uselessness of Jem's present, had bought a twenty-five cent gold watch which would go several minutes after you wound it, if you kept shaking it very hard. Emily was charmed. But the really wonderful and astonishing present was given by Dorothy, Marcia, and Lucy. They had bought a very beautiful doll, almost as large as Emily herself. The name of

the doll was Rosamonda, and ever since the girls had finished their sewing for the bazaar they had been at work on a very elegant trousseau for the splendid creature.

Everybody had brought or sent a present except Jinny. At first she didn't think of it. She was amused by seeing what the others gave, and by watching Emily accept each token with a polite, "Thank you so much."

Finally, however, it began to dawn on Jinny that she alone had given nothing; she alone had nothing to give. Even the dogs had brought each a box of bonbons.

"Jinny," whispered Dorothy, "This is for you to give Emily."

A queer knot had tied itself in Jinny's throat. She gave a sob as she said, "Oh, Dorothy!"

Dorothy had slipped something soft, fluffy, white, warm, into Jinny's hand.

"You like to give it, don't you, Jinny?" whispered Dorothy again.

"Oh, Dorothy," said Jinny. "Oh, Dorothy! I have been as good as gold sometimes lately. I'll always be good now."

This present was a white Angora kitten, one of two kittens that belonged to Mrs. Clare's beautiful white Angora. Ever since it was

born it had been growing up for Emily's birthday, and Dorothy had begged her mother to let Jinny give it. So now, Jinny's eyes shining, her lips apart, she slid towards Emily, knelt down on her knees and held up the kitten.

"This is for wishing you many, many, many, many happy returns of your birthday," she said.

"Thank you so much," Emily replied, just as she had answered all the rest. For Emily was used to having the fruit come down when she shook the tree.

"You must name the kitten yourself, Emily," Dorothy said.

"I shall call it Jinny," Emily answered on the instant, and Jinny was as proud as a peacock.

There were more presents than we can describe. Emily had not asked Dr. Goodlove to her party, but he sent a beautiful little music-box that played six different tunes. Really, the whole morning was almost too short to wind up the music-box, shake the watch that it might keep going, set the mechanical mouse in motion, etc., etc. The dogs pricked up their ears at the mouse, looked at it with their heads on one side, wanted to make a dash at it, then, when

restrained, sniffed at it, puzzled to account for the thing being alive and yet not being alive. The doll they cared nothing about at all. The Angora kitten they were well acquainted with and she with them. She could make even Toby play with her. When the presents had all been viewed, Emily, with the white sun-bonnet on her head, the red slippers on her little feet, the doll in her arms, Marcia on one side holding the Japanese umbrella over her, and Jinny on the other carrying her namesake, went down to show the kitten, Rosamonda, and the mouse to Juno. It must be confessed that Juno cared more for the clover the children picked for her than for the kitten, the doll, or the mouse. Not even the watch interested her. And the dogs didn't behave quite well. For anybody knows that if you give a box of bonbons for a birthday present it is not polite even to mention the word "bonbons," lest the recipient of the present should think you wanted some yourself. But the dogs, after bringing Emily the bonbons, kept reminding Emily with a touch of the paw or a glance towards the table where the boxes lay, that it was about time to begin. Even Toby, the polite, the sober, the learned Toby, finally sat up on his hind-legs,

put out his forepaws and begged for chocolate creams. It was some time, however, before Emily took the hint. She was herself too excited to feel hungry. It was her own "birfday," not the dogs'.

After everybody had seen the presents to their heart's content, there were games to play. Then came dinner; and by four o'clock, when the grown people began to arrive, all the children were so worn out with their good times they were glad to sit down under the willow-trees.

Somebody had brought Emily a little chair, and cousin Bevis put it in the middle of the largest table, then lifted Emily herself into the chair, and there she sat with her sunbonnet on, the Japanese parasol over her head, the red slippers on her feet, the doll on one arm and the kitten on the other.

It was Dr. Nicoll who first suggested that everybody should tell a story about the present he or she had given. Emily caught at the idea in a moment.

"Cousin Bevis," she cried, "tell me a story about my red slippers!"

"Goodness gracious," said cousin Bevis, "who would have supposed that Emily would have guessed there was a story about those red slip-

pers? If it had been the Seven-League Boots, or Puss in Boots, or the shoe that the Old Woman lived in, or Cinderella's slippers,—why, there would be a story! But all those good stories have been told so many times. Still, there generally is a story, and something must have happened before those slippers were made. For you see, *Once upon a time* there was a young man who felt sure he was a prince, and so set out to find his kingdom. There is a time of life when most of us believe that there is a kingdom somewhere in the world waiting for us, and the prince (for so we will call him) was just at that time of life. He was tall, well-made, strong; his eyes were blue, his hair was bright gold color; and he had a little mustache of the same bright gold color which turned up at each end. He was such a very charming young prince he might even be called Prince Charming. All he needed was his kingdom, but whether to go east or west or north or south for it he couldn't tell. To the east lay the sea; to the south a river that flowed into the sea; on the west was a desert; far in the north lay mountains. There was a Sibyl (which was a sort of name for a fortune-teller who lived in a grotto), and he went and consulted her in

which direction his path lay. While he waited for an answer it lightened, and thunder came forth from the grotto. A wind stirred the trees, and down came a leaf and alighted on the prince's hand. On it was written 'Climb far.' Now, as on three sides were the desert, the river, and the sea, and on the fourth the mountains, nobody could mistake this direction. So he set out at once towards the north. He tramped on mile after mile, and finally reached the foot of the mountains. A path seemed to lead up the side, distinctly pointing out the right and only way. Up went the prince with all his speed and all his strength. Sometimes the road was straight, again it zigzagged; now it crossed a ravine, so that the prince had first to scramble down then scramble up again. He would have been tired and discouraged if he had n't thought that presently he would reach the summit from which he expected to see the roof of his palace, the steeples and towers of his castles, — he felt so sure that his kingdom was all ready and waiting for him on the other side. But the way kept getting harder and harder; the path vanished. Nothing was to be seen but rocks and precipices. He could not retrace his steps, for he could not even tell whence he had come. Behind him wa^r

a torrent, in front a deep ravine. There was no going forward or back. He was afraid to move.

"Just as he was giving himself up as lost, doomed to destruction, a beautiful white kid came skipping over the rocks, fixing on him a pair of pleading eyes."

At the mention of the kid a murmur of interest and expectation ran round the circle of children.

"I thought we should come to something sometime," Peggy murmured under her breath, as cousin Bevis paused to give effect to his words.

"It was a beautiful little white kid," he now resumed, "and the prince was ready to embrace it. It did not quite approach him, but looked, then moved on and waited, as if to see that the prince followed. Follow the kid the prince did gladly. The instinct of the sure-footed little creature was not at fault. The dangers of the path were one by one surmounted. The prince soon found himself crossing a narrow pass between two ridges, from which the descent to the valley was an affair of no difficulty. Night had come, however, and it was necessary for him to find food and shelter. A cavern offered him

a place of repose, and for food he had only to kill the kid and roast it for his supper."

A cry came from Emily.

"I don't want the kid killed," she exclaimed. "You must n't let him kill that little white kid, cousin Bevis."

"Don't you see, Emily," Jem put in, "that if there's goin' to be a pair of slippers made out of" —

Cousin Bevis had not waited. "It was a cruel thing for the prince to do. He was grateful to the kid and believed that Providence had sent it to guide him on his way. He was hungry and thought that Providence had also intended the kid for his supper. He had to shut his eyes as he slew the innocent creature, for its pleading eyes looked at him in a way that broke his heart. But all the same, he killed it, skinned it, and roasted the meat at a fire he made out of dry wood. After eating a plentiful meal, he lay down and slept. He was aroused by voices. Something or somebody was saying, 'Where is the youth that killed the kid?' Then the answer came, 'This is the youth that killed the kid.'

"The prince at first thought it was a dream. Then he perceived that he was awake, and that

he was surrounded by fairies, each of whom had taken a brand from the fire which they held out in order to light up the darkness and see his face. They were queer little creatures, about as tall as my hand is long and of all sorts of shapes. What was curious was that each and every one of them had eyes that looked at the prince with the same expression as the kid's. 'What shall we do with the youth who slew the kid?' one of them asked. One replied, 'Burn him.' Another said, 'Roast him.' A third, 'Fling him over the rocks.' A fourth, 'Put out his eyes.' All these suggestions made the prince's blood run cold in his veins. He began to plead that he had meant no harm, that he had believed the kid had been sent to help him on his way to fulfill his destiny. 'So it was' said the queen of the fairies, who he saw was sitting by the ashes of the fire. 'I wished to help you,—but stupid, wicked blunderer that you are, your cruelty has spoiled everything.'

"In fact, the prince had a pretty bad time of it. He saw his act in the blackest colors. He hated himself for killing the kid; he began to make up his mind that he ought to die. Then when he quite accepted his fate, the fairies

decided that he might be allowed to live and atone for his crime. He was to hang the skin of the kid round his neck and bear it with him perpetually until he had performed some good action; had saved some life; had earned his place in the world anew. As to his kingdom, that he was not to see for a long time yet. Well, to make a long story short, the prince became a pilgrim, carrying the skin of the kid like a wallet wherever he went. He helped people on their way; he nursed the sick; he looked after little children; he lived altogether among the poor. Always he felt the weight of this terrible burden round his neck, that kept his sin ever fresh in mind."

Cousin Bevis paused. He looked round at the circle of listeners and shook his head. He felt as tired of telling his story as did the prince of his burden.

"Oh, go on, go on!" everybody cried.

"Well," said cousin Bevis, "the prince never had a chance to perform any great and wonderful action. But, finally, when he had grown sweet and noble by constant effort at doing good, he was awakened one night by hearing the fairy voices. 'Where is the man who killed the kid?' 'Here is the man who killed the

kid.' 'Has he atoned for the crime of killing the kid?' 'He has almost atoned for the crime of killing the kid.' Then the queen of the fairies lifted the skin of the kid from the prince's neck and said, 'If you take this skin and make a pair of slippers from it, and find a good little girl who can wear the slippers,—why, then you will have that kingdom you were looking for.' So that is where your slippers came from, Emily."

Emily looked down at the tips of her red slippers with her eyes full of wonder. She was going to ask questions, and the older children each attacked cousin Bevis with a question; but instantly on finishing his story he had put his handkerchief over his head and had gone to sleep, with his legs stretched out in his steamer-chair. He even snored a little. There was no help for it, so Jem was ordered to tell his story about his mouse.

"I dunno how to make up stories," said Jem, "and all I know about a mouse is that once there was a lion a-lyin' down and sleepin', an' a mouse, thinkin' it was a bronze statue of a lion, was playin' round the lion, not knowin' how dangerous it is to rouse a sleepin' lion. The lion waked up and, catchin' the mouse

between two of his claws, held him up, and was just a-poppin' him into his mouth, when the mouse, a-tremblin' and a-quiverin', said, 'Oh, please don't eat me.' 'What else are you good for?' said the lion. 'I am good for a great many things,' said the mouse. 'I'll do you a good turn yet if you let me go on livin'.' 'Well,' said the lion, 'you ain't much of a mouthful. I don't care if you live on.' Well, then the mouse it went its way, the lion he went his way, — and his mouth waterin' after somethin', he saw a bird a-flutterin' near and put out his paw to strike it, when lo and behold, he himself was caught in a net, an' the mouse came along and gnawed him out. The moral of this story is, 'There's nothin' so small that it may not be of use to you sometime. Even a lion can get into trouble.' "

"Was that my mouse?" asked Emily.

Jem didn't answer. He happened to catch sight of cousin Bevis's eye peeping out from beneath the handkerchief. The eye winked at him, and Jem understood why cousin Bevis had gone to sleep so promptly. He himself longed to retire behind a curtain. A good many people feel that way when they have told a story.

Marcia was now called on to give an account of Rosamonda.

“You know she isn’t a doll at all,” said Marcia. “She is a princess, and was the daughter of a great king who had his kingdom in the Mountains of the Moon. The king and the queen had sixteen sons, but no daughter, until this one came, and so they called her Rosamonda, Rose of the World. When she was about as big as you are, Emily, feeling anxious to know just how to educate and train their daughter, the king and queen called a council of the wise men in the kingdom. And the wise men, looking at the sun, moon, and stars and reading their signs and also the signs of the zodiac, said that it was of the utmost importance that Rosamonda should never eat any sort of fruit; that the moment any fruit crossed her lips terrible things would come to pass. Of course, the great object henceforth was to carry out these instructions. The king and queen appointed a Lord Chancellor, a Lady Superior, and ten governesses to watch the princess. She was never to be left alone for a single moment. When the princess woke in the morning, there sat the Lady Superior and five governesses by the side of her bed. The Lady Superior never slept; the governesses took turns about. The Lord Chancellor ex-

amined Rosamonda three times a day in Latin, mathematics, and the catechism, for it was necessary to give her a strong mind and the best morals, in order that she might be able to resist temptation. Every tree in the garden, every vine that bore berries or fruit, was labeled '*poison.*' When the princess saw ripe apples waving upon green boughs and longed for them, she was told that they were (besides being poisonous) sour, bitter, and would sting and bite. As a further precaution, she was never allowed to walk outside the palace, for fear that her feet might stray and her hands take forbidden things. A sedan-chair, inlaid with precious stones, was always in waiting for the princess, carried by four Ethiopian slaves, jet black, with gold armlets and anklets. I had almost forgot to say that wherever Rosamonda went, the lords and ladies of the court stood about, bowing and curtsying, crying at the top of their voices, 'The rose of the world! The rose of the world!'

(At the mention of the jet-black Ethiopians, cousin Bevis had pinched Jem and Jem had pinched Gay. This nonsense on the boys' part may have had something to do with the fact that Rosamonda, who until this moment had been

sitting bolt upright staring, suddenly shut her eyes and raised her two kid hands to her face as if to hide her blushes.)

“See how she blushes,” said Marcia. “Well, it seemed as if fate was to be propitious. Rosamonda saw the golden fruit and she saw the white clouds floating in the sky, and she no more expected to have an orange than to sail on the clouds. One day, however, when she was taking the air in the garden, with the Lady Superior and the Lord Chancellor walking in front of the sedan-chair, and five governesses on each side, a beautiful bird with gorgeous plumage flew overhead and alighted on a tree which was covered with the ripest plums, then flew away with a plum in its claws. Just as it passed over the sedan-chair, this bird was attacked by another bird, and down dropped the plum.

“The Lord Chancellor saw it coming as if into his mouth; so did the Lady Superior; and each of the ten governesses. Each was so sure it was coming straight towards him or her all alike reached out their hands to catch it. Each one missed it, then looked round with surprise to see where it had gone. Strange to say, the plum had utterly disappeared. Unless

one of the Ethiopian slaves had caught the plum in his open mouth and swallowed it whole, there was actually no way of accounting for its disappearance. The Lord Chancellor, the Lady Superior, the ten governesses, and the four Ethiopians all went down on their hands and knees, looking under the flowers and the shrubs for some sign of the plum. Nowhere was it to be found.

“Now, while they were all looking for it, Rosamonda happened to feel something cool resting against her hand. It was the plum. No use to try to tell how it came there. That is one of the secrets of magic. No use to try to tell just how it happened that once in her hand she popped it into her mouth. But it seemed to go quite naturally. She always had wondered if fruit was as black as it was painted.

“It was delicious! Not to have eaten that plum would have been to know nothing of what was delicious. It tasted something as tea-roses smell; something also like oranges, pineapples, and raspberries rolled into one, and made into a sort of ice-cream. Nobody saw her eat the plum, for they were all on the ground on their hands and knees peering under the bushes. So she not only enjoyed the plum but had time to

enjoy the effect, which was as wonderful as the fruit was delicious. Ten thousand birds began to sing ; where there had been one flower before, now there were hundreds ; the trees had grown taller and taller and they, too, seemed covered with blossoms of wonderful color and beauty, and over all the visible world there was a soft rainbow shimmer. Gradually all the colors seemed to melt and blend ; the bird songs became a lullaby. The princess felt herself floating, floating, floating away.

“ Well, when after a time the Lord Chancellor, the Lady Superior, the ten governesses, and the four Ethiopians had found out that the search for the plum was hopeless, they came back to the sedan-chair and found that Rosamonda had dropped asleep. At first they supposed it was only a nap ; but when she had slept all the rest of that day and all night and all the next day, the king and queen began to be alarmed. Physicians came, but could make nothing of it at all. There Rosamonda lay, looking lovely, with her eyes closed, color in her cheeks. The wise men were summoned. What they said was, ‘ We told you no fruit must pass her lips. Now you see what has happened. She will sleep on ; nothing can awaken her until

the true prince comes who loves her and is ready to die for her. He will kiss her, and then she will wake up.'

"That is the story of Rosamonda," Marcia now said, nodding towards the doll. "She still sleeps, ready for the true prince who shall come and awaken her with a kiss."

"Oh, papa," cried little Emily, "do kiss her this minute."

"Not I," said Dr. Nicoll. "I'm a married man and don't go in for strange princesses. Here, Bevis, evidently Rosamonda is the one who has been waiting for you all this time."

"Is she, indeed?" said cousin Bevis. He looked at the sleeping princess, and gave a little shudder; but then while Emily held her out, he kissed her manfully. Strange to relate, Rosamonda did not awake. Not a feature moved on Rosamonda's face.

"Evidently," said cousin Bevis with an air of relief, "I am not the true prince. She wants somebody younger. Jem, you try, — you or Gay."

Jem and Gay, both coloring up and looking very hot indeed, declined to make the least effort to rouse Rosamonda from her long trance. Besides, the candles had been lighted round the

birthday cake, and Emily was now called upon to come and cut it.

But after Jem and Gay had had a piece of the cake and a plateful of the other good things provided to grace Emily's birthday, and while the others were still on the other side of the willow-tree, the two boys happened to stroll back to the table where Rosamonda, for the moment deserted, lay with her beautiful head on a silk cushion.

"Of course," said Jem, "it's only a story, — but just for fun I'm goin' to kiss her. I should n't quite like to feel that if she could be waked up I had n't tried to do my best. I don't mind so much kissin' her."

Jem, too, kissed Rosamonda, but still she remained unmoved in that deep, frozen sleep. To make sure, he tried a second time.

"She don't stir an eyelid," Jem observed. "It must be you that's the true prince, Gay. You try. It must be you."

But Gay could n't be persuaded. The choice had narrowed down alarmingly. Of course it was only a story, — but still stories were sometimes true, and if Rosamonda did happen to be under a magic spell, why then, —

Gay had a bad conscience about it, never

theless ; but he was pretty sure that if he had kissed Rosamonda, and if Rosamonda had happened to wake up, Lucy would n't have liked it.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

JINNY had dropped her load of apples into the boys' baskets as they stood on the pier, then had run back and hidden behind a skiff drawn up on the beach and turned over on its side. Captain Narraway, engaged in swabbing up the deck, had not seen her or heard her. His task finished, he turned, reached over for the baskets, and put them in the hold. Then Jem and Gay appeared, loaded down with oars and boat-hooks, Carlo following after, and Jinny watched the party set off and wished she were going with them. Nothing and nobody but herself was left on the beach. She watched the bobbing of a sloop at anchor with its sails close furled, which seemed to be sailing away, but it was only the swift current that ran past it. Half a dozen boats lay tied to the little floating pier, and she jumped into one and played that she was sailing. Then the sudden glare of sunshine and the feeling of open day startled her, and she

ran home. But the idea of the river and the sea and the boats had taken possession of her. Twice within the next week Captain Narraway took her out with the other children. Once he rowed them up the river, when Jinny took a lesson at the oars, and soon rowed very well.

Then came in Emily's birthday, and Tish's was to follow; for curious as it might seem, although Emily was almost nine years younger than Tish, her birthday came first. After Tish's birthday Marcia and Lucy and Gay and Carlo and Flossy were all to go away; Jinny as well, — that is, Jinny supposed she was to go away. She did not know that Mr. Bevis had had a good many thoughts in his mind about her. She had come into their lives; she had lived among them and enjoyed with them. What could he do for her? What was best for her?

Jinny, however, had little perception that destiny had its eye upon her. One thing that gave charm to this summer holiday was the feeling that the life did not belong to her. This made the pleasure in it grow almost pain as it swelled in her heart; sometimes it seemed as if her heart would just burst; as, for example, when Dorothy gave her the kitten to give to Emily, and Emily called it Jinny. She wanted

to do all she could. One thing more she meant to do, and this is the way it came about.

She had stolen down to the river one morning, and had found a pair of oars in a skiff, left there by intention or carelessness over night. This chance was what she had longed for. A slight fog brooded over river and shores, belating the dawn. In the absence of sunshine and blue sky, in the general grayness, the feeling of the vastness, the mystery of the river and the sea, made her heart throb. A voice seemed to call her. She jumped into the boat, and untied the rope. She had a fright for a moment, for something had jumped in after her. It was Carlo. He, too, liked to feel that if anything was going on he was in it. He, too, liked the shore, and had happened to be making an early reconnoissance, and the two had met. Jinny flung her arms round Carlo, and he licked her face. Before she recollected that she had loosed the rope that fastened the boat, they were already drifting round the corner of the dock.

Jinny had a quick eye and retentive memory. She knew how Captain Narraway eased the boat with an oar, and presently the skiff, light as a cockle-shell, was moving along with the current and tide, flattering Jinny, who had taken the oars, that she had it under her control.

“Oh, Carlo,” she cried, “ain’t it beautiful?”

Carlo liked it amazingly. He had no fears, not he! He wagged his tail in answer to her words. Jinny had always felt she could do things. Even in the old days, when she sang and danced in the street and pennies were thrown to her, she had felt powers stirring in her; but what was any experience in her life to be compared with this? To be out in a boat alone; possessor of water and sky; to feel the vast, brooding spirit of the morning!

“Oh, Carlo, *ain’t* it beautiful?” she cried again.

And now the sun was up and began to break through the fog. Great patches of blue sky were suddenly unveiled; masses of vapor turned white, took on the shape of clouds, and rolled away. The water, colorless before, became a wavering track of rose and flame. There was so much to gaze at — for from the sedges on the shore on either hand myriads of birds were rising; here and there a fish leaped out of water, and the magic of the morning light created fresh effects every moment — that Jinny had forgotten to look back at High Elms. When finally she did, she saw with a start that the trees and the church spires had vanished, they were left

so far behind. But no matter ; she would think presently about going back. She wanted a glimpse of the open sea.

Carlo and she both gazed, half appalled and half delighted, at the play of a school of porpoises. Their great shapeless forms heaving out of the water, their wet sides making part of the morning gleam and effulgence, seemed to suit the great silence, the vastness, the far-offness of it all. She sat and gazed, forgetting the oars, forgetting everything. The waters, as they parted before the boat, murmured in a happy sort of fashion ; and Jinny herself sang in a soft, crooning voice, just to keep the other sounds company. Glittering meshes of sunlight by this time lay between the boat and the east. The rest of the sea showed mother-of-pearl tints. What was that line of white amid the ripples ? Why, it was the island where they had dug the clams. Jinny laughed outright at the sight.

“ Oh, if we could go there and have a clam-bake for our breakfast, Carlo,” she cried.

They had drifted by this time into the open Sound. Jinny picked up the oars and tried to think just what she ought to do to reach the bar. It was not very far off ; but until now they had been moving, not so much towards it

as past it. She tried to turn the boat ; then, as she worked one oar and then the other, she perceived that the water was no longer running swiftly towards the open sea, but, if anything, the other way. What was happening, indeed, was that the two tides had met and, to Jinny's thinking, by a happy chance the drift seemed to help her in her efforts to reach what she called "the island." Setting herself to the task, it was not long before they were near the white, shining strip of sand and shells. She knew what to do. Off came her shoes and stockings, out she jumped, and wading knee-deep, she pulled the boat up. There they were!

"Oh, Carlo," cried Jinny, "ain't it beautiful?"

Carlo took it all as a matter of course. He had been there before. He followed Jinny about as she ran from one end of the bar to the other, with a proud feeling of having done this all herself and a wonder as to what Dorothy, Marcia, Tish, and the others would say if they knew it. Then, too, there was the throb of rapture at the beauty of the sea and sky ; of its all belonging to her ; of the sun shining for her ; the fish leaping out of the sea for her. She was not left out of things this time ; she was not obliged to miss the good times. She had conquered

this happy, splendid fate. She sat down in the middle of the bar, clasped her hands round her knees, and sang song after song, at the top of her voice.

All this made her hungry, and when her songs were done she set to work digging for clams. Not having a fire to cook them, she devoured them raw, and gave some to Carlo. While she was eating, she happened to see at no very great distance a boat tossing slightly, as it moved all the time a little farther away. Whose boat? she wondered vaguely.

Having eaten the clams, Jinny jumped up from the sand feeling refreshed. She turned to look at her own boat. Where was it? Could that have been her boat that she had seen? There it was! The skiff had floated with the rising tide; it had drifted away.

"I expect I'll have to swim out and get it," said Jinny.

She ran into the water as if expecting that she could swim by instinct, then drew back with a queer, nameless sense of fear. She had n't grasped the real danger of the position, but was smitten with a new feeling of helplessness. If the boat had gone for good, why she and Carlo would have to live forever on this little strip of

sand. The boat kept getting farther and farther off every moment. What was to be done? Jinny looked towards the harbor mouth, wishing Captain Narraway would come and find her. Not a boat was in sight save her own. She turned and searched the wider horizons of the Sound. She saw the smoke of a steamer far towards the south, and away to the east off Charles Island a yacht lay at anchor. But it was so far, so far away!

What suddenly startled her cruelly was the palpable fact that the island on which she stood was growing smaller. What did it mean? All her faculties were instantly sharpened. What was it about the tide? She could remember now that the day after the clam-bake Marcia had looked back at this place and said, "The clams are happy now, for it's high water." *There had been no strip of Silver Bar showing.* Was it always so? Did the strip of sand and shell come up and then go down like the porpoises, utterly vanishing out of sight?

Something gripped at Jinny's heart. She put her arms round Carlo and clung to him, hiding her eyes. But let her shut out the sight, she could not shut away the dread of it all. She looked again. The little waves, lapping one upon

the other, were drawing on each side nearer to each other.

She uttered a stifled cry. Carlo, too, was gathering apprehension. Carlo, too, felt that something was happening. The gurgle of the water sounding unceasingly grew louder and louder and seemed to threaten. A puff of wind, cool and deep, began to blow over them. The glare of the sun began to be blinding. Jinny suddenly remembered those terrible monsters, the porpoises, — they must be coming towards her, watching, waiting, opening their mouths for her.

She remembered so many things; so many people, people she had almost forgotten. Chiefly, however, she thought of Dorothy, — of Dorothy sitting in the waiting-room, and of the shining piece of silver that came out of Dorothy's purse.

"Oh, Dorothy," cried Jinny at the top of her voice, "I'll be good. I'll be just as good as I know how, — *if only*" —

The water was full of voices now; a great many seemed to be speaking at once. On each side the shining ripples seemed to come faster and faster, as if they longed to meet. Carlo looked up at Jinny inquiringly; and when she did not speak, he licked her hand as if to ask her what it all meant.

“Oh, Dorothy,” cried Jinny, at the top of her voice. “Oh, Dorothy, I will be good. Ask the angels up in heaven to help me.”

Then came that sharpening of sense and instinct, as she felt the cool water under her bare feet.

“What can I do, — I must do something,” Jinny said with a little sob.

She saw Carlo swimming. The waters had met!

CHAPTER XX

A PARTING OF THE WAYS AGAIN

THIS was Tish's birthday, but somehow it did not seem to go off very well. That was the fault of having two birthdays so near together, Jem said, and he was glad that his did not come until the first of October. Tish had presents, of course, and Tish was grateful; but somehow a weight seemed to hang on all the children. Marcia had to set to work packing her trunk, for her aunt was to send for her next day to go to Bar Harbor. Of course that was the reason they all felt so gloomy. Then Lucy and Gay were to go home on the day after tomorrow, Carlo and Flossy, too. Where was Carlo? For the matter of that, where was Jinny, who had been asked to come for breakfast and to spend the day?

About ten o'clock a messenger came from the Home to inquire if Jinny was at the rectory. She had gone out early, the messenger said, and had not come back. Soon after this Carlo

appeared with rather a wild eye. He had been out in salt water, Gay said. Later it was heard that he had been seen by Dr. Goodlove crossing Stillford bridge running towards High Elms. How very odd! Why should Carlo have gone all alone to Stillford?

By noon the fact that a girl was missing from the "Summer Home" was coupled with the news that Captain Narraway's empty skiff had been picked up somewhere off the lighthouse, and that a pair of shoes and stockings lay on the bottom.

So the wonder grew, and the fear, — and the grief! It was a hard day for all the children to bear. They knew now why their hearts had been so heavy. They did not dare say yet what their dread was. They could only hang round their elders and look and plead and be answered, —

"Oh, there will be some news soon."

They had to go to bed without news, and to wake up without it. But before Marcia's train went, news did come in the shape of a telegram from New London addressed to Dr. Nicoll.

"Girl named Jenny Terriss picked up by boat belonging to yacht Siren off Stillford beach at ten o'clock yesterday. She has come

to consciousness and is likely to live. J. B. Packer, master."

Jinny did live. It was indeed her fate that had been busy with the events of that morning. For two people on board the yacht *Siren*, being childless, took a fancy to the girl, grew to love her as they nursed her back to health and strength, and finally adopted her and brought her up as their own child.

Was Dorothy ever to see her again? That secret, like many others, was only to be answered in the story of the years that came after.

We can hope that Dorothy and all her friends met many times again. But all breakings-up are painful. Jinny was gone, Marcia was going, and the twins and their dogs next day.

After these many partings, what could Dorothy and Tish and Jem and Peggy and Emily, not to say Toby, do to console themselves—except to go over to see cousin Bevis?

